

Public works inquiry into the state-controlled roads from Birdsville to Bedourie and Birdsville to Windorah

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Transport and Resources Committee
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Transport and Resources Committee

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All web address references are current at the time of publishing.

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Chair's foreword

This report presents a summary of the Transport and Resources Committee's examination into the state-controlled roads from Birdsville to Bedourie and Birdsville to Windorah.

On behalf of the committee, I thank those individuals and organisations who made written submissions and appeared at the committee's public hearings. I'd particularly like to thank the Mayor, council members and officers of the Diamantina Shire Council for providing vehicles, refreshments and valuable advice to the committee on 16 August 2023 during our site inspection of the roads that were the subjects of this inquiry. Thank you also to representatives of the Birdsville Racecourse and OBE Organics for additional ground transport and local insights supplied during our visit to Birdsville.

I additionally acknowledge the exceptional turnout of residents and witnesses to the public hearings which we convened in Birdsville on 16 and 17 August 2023. Notably, the Mayor and officers of Barcoo Shire Council drove 5 hours each way to appear before the committee at the public hearing. Their evidence provided valuable insight, contributing to the content of this report.

I also thank our Parliamentary Service staff and officers of the Department of Transport and Main Roads who assisted with the inquiry.

I commend this report to the House.


Shane King MP

Chair

Conclusions

The committee has concluded:

- The work is suitable for its purpose.
- The work was necessary and advisable.
- The work was reasonable value for money.
- The costs and recurrent costs of the work are reasonable.
- The work has had a positive impact on the community, the economy and the environment.
- The procurement method for the work was suitable.
- The balance of public and private sector involvement in the work was satisfactory.
- The work was completed according to specifications, and delivered ahead of time and within budget, while meeting contractual obligations.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1 **2**

The committee recommends that the Legislative Assembly note the contents of this report.

Recommendation 2 **28**

The committee recommends that the Department of Transport and Main Roads should consider a) flexibility when applying national guidelines for low volume roads in areas that experience high seasonal levels of road use, particularly with respect to the width of seal necessary to locate additional overtaking lanes of sufficient length to mitigate the reported impact of dust reducing visibility, and b) the need for appropriate signage to inform road users of the length of overtaking lane available.

Recommendation 3 **33**

The committee recommends that the Minister for Transport and Main Roads considers urgent steps to pave and seal the remaining 15.7 kilometres of unsealed length of the Eyre Developmental Road between Birdsville and Bedourie to ensure that Birdsville is no longer the only township in the Central West District located on a state-controlled road that does not have a fully sealed access. In making this recommendation, we are aware of the significant flood mitigation that is required for the roads subject of this inquiry and urge the Department of Transport and Main Roads to continue consulting with local landowners on the length's optimal design.

Executive summary

Queensland has the longest state-controlled road network of any state or territory in Australia at 33,367 kilometres in length. The Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR) manages and operates this infrastructure asset.

This public works inquiry into the works effected over the last 5 financial years on the state-controlled roads from Birdsville to Bedourie and Birdsville to Windorah included the:

- Eyre Developmental Road - from Birdsville to the intersection near King Creek Crossing (164km in length)
- Diamantina Developmental Road - from King Creek to Bedourie (22km in length)
- Birdsville Developmental Road - from Birdsville to the intersection with the Diamantina Developmental Road (265km in length)
- Diamantina Developmental Road - from the intersection with the Birdsville Developmental Road (near Morney) to Windorah (108km in length).

The subject roads are in DTMR's Central West district. That district supports 4,378 kilometres of state-controlled road network that traverses some of the most remote parts of the state. The district is the largest in Queensland, being almost the size of Victoria. The townships of Bedourie, Birdsville and Windorah are home to approximately 364 residents of which about one quarter identified in the 2021 Census as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. These townships are in a very remote area of Queensland and experience significant disadvantage because of the tyranny of distance, compounded by the quality of the land transport infrastructure, including no rail network and predominantly unsealed sections of road. Birdsville to Adelaide (1171km) is closer than Birdsville to Brisbane (1579km). Residents regularly travel to Mt Isa, Adelaide or Toowoomba for medical appointments, bulk supplies and many other health and recreational activities that are not available in the region.

During the inquiry, we considered the scope of the project; the specific works undertaken; the purpose, suitability, necessity and advisability of the works; the value for money; the procurement and construction processes; and whether the works achieved their purpose. We concluded:

- The work is suitable for its purpose.
- The work was necessary and advisable.
- The work was reasonable value for money.
- The costs and recurrent costs of the work are reasonable.
- The work has had a positive impact on the community, the economy and the environment.
- The procurement method for the work was suitable.
- The balance of public and private sector involvement in the work was satisfactory.
- The work was completed according to specifications, and delivered ahead of time and within budget, while meeting contractual obligations.

However, our inquiry did identify several issues, and we made 3 recommendations as a result.

We found that local government authorities were experiencing significantly higher costs to maintain their routine and unscheduled maintenance of the roads that were the subject of this inquiry, particularly in relation to their currently restricted use of gravel quarry areas. We concluded that these

costs are avoidable and prevent local governments from being able to achieve optimal levels of public works. As a result, we ask the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Department of Resources to continue to work urgently with local councils and native title parties to resolve council gravel pit access issues in Queensland.

Submitters also expressed concerns about road safety in relation to the optimal length of overtaking lanes and the need for signage to advise drivers of their length, particularly as road traffic can increase by as much as 2,000 per cent above the average annual daily traffic figure when tourists travel to major events in the region. In this regard, we recommend that the Department of Transport and Main Roads should consider a) flexibility when applying national guidelines for low volume roads in areas that experience high seasonal levels of road use, particularly with respect to the width of seal necessary to locate additional overtaking lanes of sufficient length to mitigate the reported impact of dust reducing visibility, and b) the need for appropriate signage to inform road users of the length of overtaking lane available.

Many submitters spoke to the benefits of sealed roads to improve liveability for residents, including more efficient access to goods and services (including health services) and social and recreational services; consistent and reliable transportation to boarding schools (noting that Birdsville only has a primary school); improved community cohesion between neighbouring towns; and increased choice of transportation (avoiding costly air travel). In this regard, we recommend that the Minister for Transport and Main Roads considers urgent steps to pave and seal the remaining 15.7 kilometres of unsealed length of the Eyre Developmental Road between Birdsville and Bedourie to ensure that Birdsville is no longer the only township in the Central West District located on a state-controlled road that does not have a fully sealed access. In making this recommendation, we are aware of the significant flood mitigation that is required for the roads that are the subject of this inquiry and urge DTMR to continue consulting with local landowners on the optimal design for future road pave and seal works.

We thank DTMR, Diamantina Shire Council, Barcoo Shire Council and all submitters and witnesses for their contributions to this inquiry.

1 Introduction

1.1 Role of the committee

The Transport and Resources Committee (committee) is a portfolio committee of the Legislative Assembly which commenced on 26 November 2020 under the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* and the Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly.¹

The committee's primary areas of responsibility are:

- Transport, Main Roads and Digital Services
- Energy, Renewables, Hydrogen, Public Works and Procurement
- Resources.

Under section 94 of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*, the committee has the following responsibilities to the extent that they relate to the committee's portfolio areas:

- (a) the assessment of the integrity, economy, efficiency and effectiveness of government financial management by—
 - (i) examining government financial documents; and
 - (ii) considering the annual and other reports of the auditor-general;
- (b) works (public works) undertaken by an entity that is a constructing authority for the works if the committee decides to consider the works;
- (c) any major works if the committee decides to consider the works.²

1.2 Scope of inquiry

On 17 April 2023, the Transport and Resources Committee resolved to conduct a public works inquiry into the state-controlled roads from Birdsville to Bedourie and Birdsville to Windorah. Specifically, these roads are identified as:

- Eyre Developmental Road - from Birdsville to the intersection near King Creek Crossing (164km in length)
- Diamantina Developmental Road - from King Creek to Bedourie (22km in length)
- Birdsville Developmental Road - from Birdsville to the intersection with the Diamantina Developmental Road (265km in length)
- Diamantina Developmental Road - from the intersection with the Birdsville Developmental Road (near Morney) to Windorah (108km in length).

The terms of reference for the inquiry, as set out in section 94 of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*, are to examine the public works effected over the last 5 financial years on these state-controlled roads and, having regard to the following, report to the Parliament on:

- a. the stated purpose of the works and the apparent suitability of the works for the purpose; and

¹ *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*, section 88 and Standing Order 194.

² *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*, section 94.

- b. the necessity for, and the advisability of, the works; and
- c. value for money achieved, or likely to be achieved, by the works; and
- d. revenue produced by, and recurrent costs of, the works or estimates of revenue and costs for the works; and
- e. the present and prospective public value of the works, including, for example, consideration of the impact of the works on the community, economy and environment; and
- f. procurement methods for the works; and
- g. the balance of public and private sector involvement in the works; and
- h. the performance of—
 - (i) the constructing authority for the works; and
 - (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; and
- i. the actual suitability of the works in meeting the needs and in achieving the stated purpose of the works.

1.3 Inquiry process

On 23 May 2023 the committee sought a written submission from the Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR/department) addressing the terms of reference and responses to specific questions. Appendix D contains details of these questions.

Also on 23 May 2023, the committee invited stakeholders and subscribers to make written submissions addressing the terms of reference. Submissions closed on 18 July 2023. Twelve submissions were received, including the submission from DTMR. Appendix A contains a list of submitters.

On 16 August 2023, the committee undertook a site inspection of roads from Birdsville to Bedourie and Birdsville and Windorah, accompanied by representatives of the Diamantina Shire Council, which is the body contracted by DTMR to construct public road works on roads the subject of this inquiry.

The committee held public hearings in Birdsville on 16 and 17 August 2023, attended by 30 of the approximately 80 permanent Birdsville residents, during which we heard from submitters and stakeholders including local government, First Nations peoples, and pastoral, transport, and major events representatives. Appendix B contains the list of participants. We also held a briefing with DTMR on 9 October 2023. Appendix C contains the list of participants.

The submissions, correspondence from DTMR and transcripts of the briefing and hearings are available on the committee's webpage.

Recommendation 1

The committee recommends that the Legislative Assembly note the contents of this report.



Committee members and Diamantina Shire Council officers at a site inspection on 16 August 2023.

2 Background and scope of the project

2.1 Roads subject of this inquiry

Three state-controlled roads are covered by this inquiry, including the Diamantina Developmental Road, Birdsville Developmental Road and Eyre Developmental Road. These roads facilitate access through the Channel Country of western Queensland and are described in the DTMR submission as:

- Diamantina Developmental Road (Windorah – Bedourie) (Road No. 93C)
 - 0.0km to 108.9km (Windorah – 93C/80A intersection)
 - 366.96km to 388.78km (93C/81A intersection - Bedourie)
- Birdsville Developmental Road (Morney – Birdsville) (Road No. 80A)
 - 0.0km to 265.42km
- Eyre Developmental Road (Bedourie – Birdsville) (Road No. 81A)
 - 0.0km to 162.89km
- Eyre Developmental Road (Birdsville – South Australia Border) (Road No. 81B)
 - 0.0km to 4.09km.³

³ Submission 4, pp 6-7.

DTMR noted:

As the predominant transport and tourism link within this area, the state-controlled roads network linking Bedourie, Birdsville and Windorah provide for the local community's connectivity with essential services beyond the area including health, education, business, and social amenities.

These state-controlled roads have their own challenges as they can be impassable during extended rainfall events or from water flowing down from the large northern catchments that drain into the channel country. The area is also subject to significant traffic volume increases due to tourist events during the cooler months which include the annual events of the Big Red Bash and Birdsville Races in Birdsville. The traffic increase can be as much as 2000% above the average annual daily traffic figure. These traffic increases cause extensive damage to the road network, especially the unsealed sections which require formation grading before and after annual events, which places a strain on the routine maintenance budget allocations for the unsealed road sections.⁴

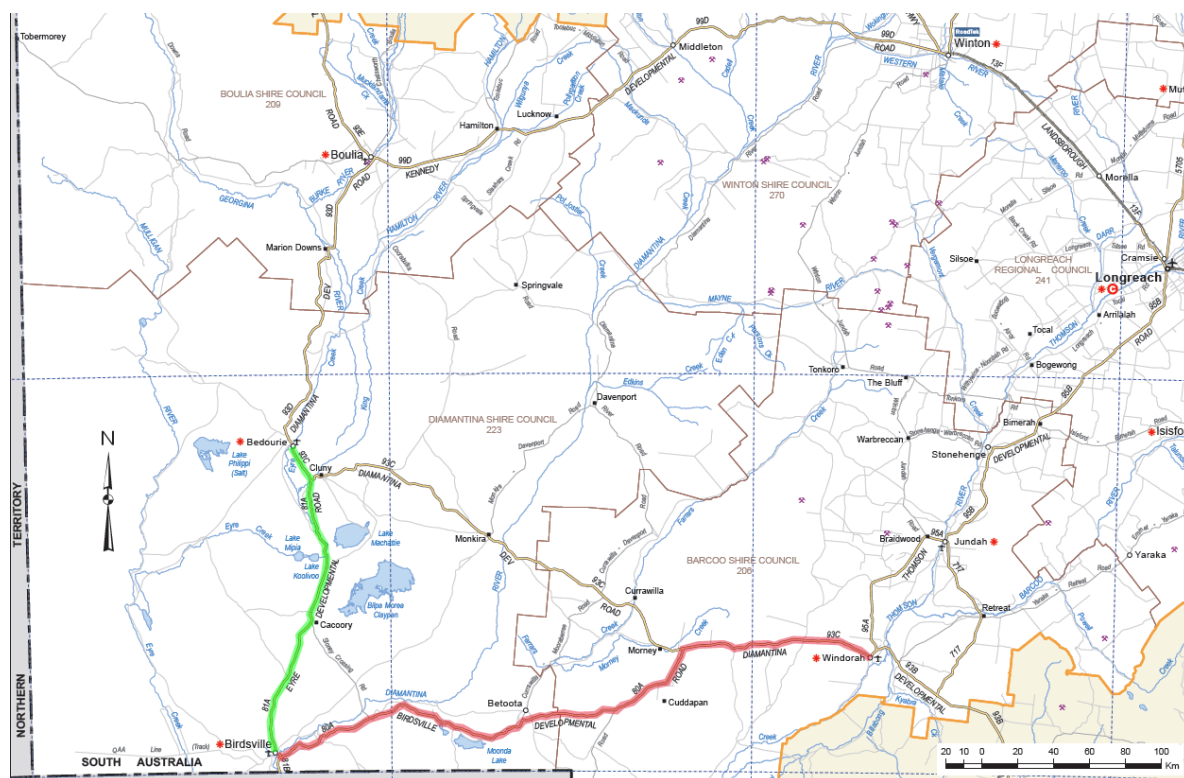
The unsealed sections of these roads are not subject of this inquiry because there have been no recently completed public works; however, the committee notes many submitters urged the sealing of road links between the relevant townships of Birdsville, Bedourie, and Windorah to maximise the benefits arising from the various pave and seal projects which are the subject of this inquiry.⁵

All roads subject of this inquiry facilitate the movement of freight, local traffic, and service vehicles and act as stock routes. They are approved for use by Type 2 road trains up to 53.5m in length and have a regulated speed of 100km/h which reduces to 50km/h on the approach to townships.⁶

⁴ Submission 4, p 6.

⁵ See submissions 2, 5, 8, 11 and 12.

⁶ DTMR, submission 4, pp 7-8.

Figure 1: Locality map (extract from Central West District Map 2021)⁷

2.1.1 Diamantina Developmental Road (Windorah to Bedourie)

This section of road links the townships of Windorah and Bedourie and forms a link between the Warrego and Barkly Highways. The road is 388.78 kilometres in length, with 175.34 kilometres being unsealed at the date of reporting. Only the sections of this road between Windorah and the start of the Birdsville Development Road near Morney (109km), and Bedourie and the start of the Eyre Development Road near Cluny (22km), are subject of this inquiry. The road varies between a sealed road width of 4.0m and 8.8m, and its Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) volume is 56 vehicles per day, with a heavy vehicle percentage of 23.6 per cent.⁸

The Central Queensland Region Unsealed Road Priority Planning Report, completed in 2016, ranked this road as the 18th highest priority out of 41 high priority unsealed links in the Central Queensland Region. By June 2023, this road is now ranked 17th highest priority in Central Queensland Region.⁹

2.1.2 Eyre Developmental Road

This road forms a link between the Diamantina Developmental Road near Cluny and the Queensland and South Australia borders. It is constituted by 2 state-controlled roads: Bedourie – Birdsville: Road No. 81A, and Birdsville – South Australia Border: Road No. 81B. The road is approximately 164 kilometres in length with 15.7 kilometres on Road 81A, and 9.5 kilometres on Road 81B, remaining unsealed at the time of reporting. The road varies between a sealed road width of 4.0m and 8.0m on Road 81A and 3.6m and 8.0m on road 81B. The AADT volume of Road 81A is 42 vehicles per day, with

⁷ DTMR, submission 4, p 6. The full map of the DTMR Central West District is published online at: https://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/media/travelandtransport/maps-and-guides/regiondistrictmaps/centralwestdistrict.pdf?sc_lang=en&hash=660377E301582DFCCC19378C1C7913B2.

⁸ DTMR, submission 4, p 7.

⁹ DTMR, submission 4, p 7.

a heavy vehicle percentage of 29.6 per cent; the AADT volume of Road 81B is 87 vehicles per day, with a heavy vehicle percentage of 16.9 per cent.¹⁰

The Central Queensland Region Unsealed Road Priority Planning Report, completed in 2016, ranked Road 81A the second highest priority out of 41 unsealed links in Central Queensland Region. By June 2023, Road 81A is now ranked the highest priority in Central Queensland Region.¹¹

2.1.3 Birdsville Developmental road (Morney-Birdsville)

This section of road links the Diamantina Development Road near Morney and the Eyre Development Road 4 kilometres south of Birdsville. It is 265 kilometres in length, with 196.7 kilometres of the link remaining unsealed at the time of reporting. The road varies between a sealed road width of 4.0m and 10.0m. The AADT volume of the link is 42 vehicles per day, with a heavy vehicle percentage of 27.23 per cent.¹²

The Central Queensland Region Unsealed Road Priority Planning Report, completed in 2016, ranked this road the third highest priority out of 41 high priority unsealed links in Central Queensland Region. By June 2023, this road is now ranked second highest priority in Central Queensland Region.¹³

2.2 Location

The subject roads are in DTMR's Central West district. That district supports 4,378 kilometres of state-controlled road network that traverses some of the most remote parts of the state. The district is the largest in Queensland, being almost the size of Victoria.¹⁴ The townships of Bedourie, Birdsville and Windorah are home to approximately 364 residents of which about one quarter identified in the 2021 Census as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. These townships are in a very remote area of Queensland and experience significant disadvantage because of the tyranny of distance, compounded by the quality of the land transport infrastructure, including no rail network and predominantly unsealed sections of road.¹⁵ Birdsville to Adelaide (1171km) is closer than Birdsville to Brisbane (1579km). Residents regularly travel to Mt Isa, Adelaide or Toowoomba for medical appointments, bulk supplies and many other health and recreational activities that are not available in the region.¹⁶

2.3 Works undertaken

DTMR representatives advised the committee:

In the past five years TMR has progressed more than \$32 million of works to seal additional sections of two key unsealed routes into Birdsville: the Eyre Developmental Road between Bedourie and Birdsville, which provides access from northern Australia via Mount Isa; and the Birdsville Developmental Road between Morney and Birdsville which provides access from western areas, including Longreach and Quilpie, and on to major centres along the east coast. Specifically, this investment included progressively sealing more than 36 kilometres between Bedourie and Birdsville through five separate projects totalling \$23 million...

Between Morney and Birdsville, \$9.2 million in sealing works have been delivered via two separate projects on this 265-kilometre road, reducing the length of unsealed sections to 196.7 kilometres.

To optimise the funding available and increase road safety outcomes by ensuring the longest length of road possible was sealed, these projects applied a six-metre-wide seal width on an eight-metre-wide formation. This is consistent with national guidelines for low-volume roads

¹⁰ DTMR, submission 4, p 8.

¹¹ DTMR, submission 4, p 8.

¹² DTMR, submission 4, p 7.

¹³ DTMR, submission 4, p 8.

¹⁴ Public briefing transcript, Brisbane, 9 October 2023, pp 1-2.

¹⁵ DTMR, submission 4, p 5.

¹⁶ Diamantina Shire Council, submission 3, p 1.

with an annual average daily traffic volume of fewer than 150 vehicles. Eight-metre-wide sealing has occurred in places to provide overtaking opportunities and in recognition that this is expected to become the future sealing width vision.¹⁷

DTMR advised that since 2018-19, capital projects on the subject roads have included:

- 9 road upgrades comprising earthworks, subgrade compaction, place unbound pavement (stabilised for floodways) and bitumen seal
- 2 rest area upgrades
- 3 small cell towers installation to provide mobile phone coverage at 3 rest areas.¹⁸

2.3.1 Project funding

DTMR stated:

Over the last five years, funding has been approved for capital works projects on the Birdsville to Windorah and Birdsville to Bedourie links from various sources. The Australian and Queensland Governments partnered in jointly funded roads infrastructure stimulus packages in 2020-21. These projects were crucial in helping to secure jobs and support the Queensland economy to bounce back after COVID-19. The funding also aided in ensuring safe transport connections were maintained for all of Australia to keep moving.¹⁹

Table 1: Projects funding sources²⁰

Funding source	Abbreviation	Description
Regional Economic Enabling Fund	REEF	Capital projects with an 80:20 funding split between the Australian Government and Queensland Government respectively.
Road Safety Program	RSP	Roadworks to improve road safety and move towards zero fatalities and serious injuries on state-controlled roads. This was an 80:20 funding split between the Australian Government and Queensland Government respectively.
State Road Network Upgrades	SRNU	The SRNU Investment Program is primarily focused on delivering road enhancement projects to improve transport productivity, capacity and access, safety and resilience. 100% funded by Queensland Government.
Roads and Transport Alliance / Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme	RTA TIDS	The Outback Regional Roads and Transport Group (ORRTG) comprising the 7 local authorities in the TMR Central West District manage annual TIDS. They can elect to use their Queensland Government funded local government grants on the state-controlled road network. 100% funded by Queensland Government.
Targeted Road Safety Program	TRSP	The TRSP Investment Program's purpose is to achieve targeted benefits by coordinating safety interventions to the delivery of a safer road environment.
Transport and Tourism Connections	TTC	Managed by TMR, this program provides financial support for state and local governments and the private sector to work together to provide a transport system to connect tourism experiences, essential to Queensland's social and economic infrastructure. 100% funded by Queensland Government.

¹⁷ Public briefing transcript, Brisbane, 9 October 2023, pp 1-2.

¹⁸ Submission 4, p 9.

¹⁹ Submission 4, p 9.

²⁰ Table adapted from DTMR, submission 4, p 9.

2.3.2 Project descriptions

Table 2 provides a DTMR summary of the total cost and length of works undertaken per subject road. The specific public works projects for each subject road are contained below.

Table 2: Summary of projects - total costs and lengths per road segment²¹

Road	Pave & Seal Length (km)	Expenditure (\$M)	Other capital works (\$M)
Birdsville Developmental Road (80A)	14.10	9.235	0.592
Eyre Developmental Road (81A)	32.72	23.134	0.542
Diamantina Developmental Road (93C)	0.00	0	0.180
Total	46.82	32.369	1.314

2.3.2.1 *Diamantina Development Road*

Table 3: DTMR project descriptions – Diamantina Development Road rest area²²

TMR Project ID	Road	Location	Value	Funding source	Description	Principal contractor	Completion date
2035023	93C	109.2km	\$0.18M	TRSP	Small cell tower installation providing Telstra 4GX mobile service at Morney Turnoff Rest Area (Part of a combined project across the 3 developmental roads which includes 8 other sites in the Central West District).	Telstra Corporation Ltd	11/04/22

2.3.2.2 *Eyre Development Road*

Table 4: DTMR project descriptions – Eyre Development Road²³

TMR Project ID	Road	Location	Length	Value	Funding source	Description	Principal contractor	Completion date
670699	81A	68.23km - 72.00km	2.60km	\$1.16M	RTA TIDS	Pave and seal - 6m sealed width on an 8m wide formation. 8m sealed width on an 8m wide formation for floodway, crest and curve widening	Diamantina Shire Council	24/01/19
285273	81A	68.23km - 72.00km	3.77km	\$1.82M	RTA TIDS	Pave and seal - 6m sealed width on an 8m wide formation. 8m sealed width on an 8m wide formation for floodway, crest and curve widening	Diamantina Shire Council	23/07/20

²¹ Submission 4, p 14.

²² Submission 4, pp 13, 14.

²³ Submission 4, pp 10-14.

TMR Project ID	Road	Location	Length	Value	Funding source	Description	Principal contractor	Completion date
2035023	81A	83.2km	n/a	\$0.192M	TRSP	Small cell tower installation providing Telstra 4GX mobile service at Carcoory Ruins Rest Area (Part of a combined project across the 3 developmental roads which includes 8 other sites in the Central West District).	Telstra Corporation Limited	01/06/22
1834565	81A	83.14km - 83.34km	0.20km	\$0.35M	RSP	Carcoory Ruins Rest Area upgrade (Combined project with Birdsville Development Road which includes installation of one toilet building and one shelter with table and seating; Gravel pad for small cell tower assembly; Construction of gravel parking area and turnouts; 12-volt lighting.)	Diamantina Shire Council for civil works; Orca Solar Lighting - supply and install 12-volt lighting; Moodie Outdoor Products - supply and install buildings	01/10/22
883795/ 1647774	81A	72.95km - 86.06km	13.11km	\$11.53M	RTA (\$1.153M) SRNU (\$10M)	Pave and seal - 6m sealed width on an 8m wide formation. 8m sealed width on an 8m wide formation for floodway, crest and curve widening.	Diamantina Shire Council	13/10/22
1687043	81A	136.4km - 146.21km	9.81km	\$4.5M	REEF	Pave and seal - 6m sealed width on an 8m wide formation. 8m sealed width on an 8m wide formation for floodway, crest and curve widening.	Diamantina Shire Council	9/6/23
2127443	81A	129.2km - 136.4km	7.2km	\$4.5M	TRSP	Pave and seal - 6m sealed width on an 8m wide formation. 8m sealed width on an 8m wide formation for floodway, crest and curve widening.	Diamantina Shire Council	Ongoing

2.3.2.3 *Birdsville Development Road***Table 5: DTMR project descriptions – Birdsville Development Road²⁴**

TMR Project ID	Road	Location	Length	Value	Funding Source	Description	Principal Contractor	Completion Date
470262	80A	264.36km - 265.54km	1.18km	\$0.99M	TTC	Pave and seal - 8m sealed width on an 8m wide formation	Diamantina Shire Council	20/11/18
1834565	80A	111.16km	n/a	\$0.4M ²⁵	RSP	Rainbow Serpent Rest Area upgrade (Combined project with Eyre Development Road which includes installation of one toilet building and one shelter with table and seating; Gravel pad for small cell tower assembly; Construction of gravel parking area and turnouts; 12-volt lighting.)	Diamantina Shire Council for civil works; Orca Solar Lighting - supply and install 12-volt lighting; Moodie Outdoor Products – supply and install buildings	11/06/21 ²⁶
1687978	80A	23.2km to 29.51km	6.31km	\$4.5M	REEF	Pave and seal - 6m sealed width on an 8m wide formation. 8m sealed width on an 8m wide formation for floodway, crest and curve widening.	Barcoo Shire Council	02/03/22
2035023	80A	111.16km	n/a	\$0.191M ²⁷	TRSP	Small cell tower installation providing Telstra 4GX mobile service at Rainbow Serpent Rest Area (Part of a combined project across the 3 developmental roads which includes 8 other sites in the Central West District).	Telstra Corporation Limited	31/05/22 ²⁸
1999355	80A	83.86km – 90.48km	6.62km	\$3.75M	TRSP	Pave and seal - 6m sealed width on an 8m wide formation. 8m sealed width on an 8m wide formation for floodway, crest and curve widening.	Barcoo Shire Council	08/06/23

²⁴ Submission 4, pp 9-10, 13-14.²⁵ Project value assumed based on total combined project value for the Birdsville Developmental Road and Eyre Developmental Road and the DTMR-supplied project value for the Diamantina Development Road component.²⁶ Completion date is the listed completion date for the combined projects across both developmental roads (Birdsville Developmental Road and Eyre Developmental Road).²⁷ Project value assumed based on total project value for sites across the 3 developmental roads and DTMR-supplied project values for the Diamantina Development Road and Eyre Development Road site components.²⁸ Completion date is the listed completion date for the combined projects across the 3 developmental roads.

3 Purpose of the work

DTMR advised that the ‘purpose of the pave and seal road projects was to bitumen seal as much of the road as possible to reduce maintenance costs associated with gravel re-sheeting of unsealed roads’.²⁹ Bitumen sealing aims to improve network resilience to achieve benefits in road safety, freight efficiency and reliability of the network. The Queensland Government recognises that the sealing of roads connecting to Birdsville is critical infrastructure and essential in supporting remote communities’ connectivity in Queensland, and includes funding that supports growth, productivity and jobs in the far western centre.³⁰ DTMR further advised:

More broadly as well, the funding supports growth and productivity and jobs in the far western centre.³¹

...

This in turn significantly improves connectivity of the Birdsville area remote communities to larger economic centres via road. The flood resilience is also improved to enable the road to be open to traffic sooner following prolonged wet weather and subsequent minor and major flooding in the channel country river systems (Thomson River, Coopers Creek, Georgina River and Eyre Creek catchments).

The channel country in far western Queensland supports the lucrative 100% grass-fed beef cattle industry. Delivery of stock to market using cattle trucks on potholed and unsealed roads damages and maims a percentage of the livestock. Smoother, bitumen sealed roads enable transport of cattle to market/saleyards with less cattle damage and reduced transport costs (cost of breakdown due to tyre punctures).³²

DTMR identified additional benefits of the works to include:

- improved road surface conditions contributing to lower maintenance costs
- improved access to healthcare in Birdsville and beyond
- Improved access to education in Birdsville and beyond
- employment, training and business development opportunities for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.³³

DTMR advised that the progressive sealing of the Eyre Developmental Road supports its long-term strategy to seal significant roads in Central West Queensland to support regional communities and industries, and further notes that DTMR's strategic document – The Central West Regional Transport Plan 2019 – has the following action:

Implement the region’s road improvement prioritisation strategies through undertaking planning for the region’s key road projects, in particular planning to have at least one sealed road access to every town in the Central West Queensland region to support the efficient, safe and reliable movements of people and freight. This includes undertaking business case development to complete paving and sealing on the Eyre Developmental Road (Bedourie to Birdsville) and Blackall-Jericho Road.³⁴

3.1 Alignment with DTMR’s Strategic Plan and service delivery objectives

DTMR advised that public works on the subject roads support the Queensland Government’s strategic priorities by providing a safe, integrated, reliable and efficient transport system accessible to

²⁹ Submission 4, p 17.

³⁰ Submission 4, p 17.

³¹ Submission 4, pp 16.

³² Submission 4, p 17.

³³ Submission 4, p 17.

³⁴ Submission 4, p 15.

everyone.³⁵ The department indicated that the works align with its Strategic Plan and a number of other strategic and service delivery objectives such as the Queensland Plan 2014, the State Infrastructure Plan 2016, and the Transport Infrastructure Asset Management Policy (November 2021).³⁶

Specific note is made of the public works on the subject roads being aligned to the Transport Coordination Plan 2017 (TCP) in the following ways:

Table 6: DTMR Transport Coordination Plan objectives³⁷

TCP Objectives	Strategies	Project alignment
Transport meets the needs of all Queenslanders, now and into the future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shape deliverables and services with a customer focus • Co-design solutions that embrace the future and create value for customers • Communicate effectively and meaningfully with customers 	<p>The preferred option provides a reference design that improves network capacity beyond the design year of 2031.</p> <p>The improved design addressed key community issues associated with this part of the State-Controlled Road Network including congestion and road user safety.</p>
Transport connects communities to employment and vital services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate land use and transport to promote community cohesion and environmental sustainability • Protect and maintain and operate our network to ensure resilience and safety 	<p>The additional capacity provided by the projects will facilitate ongoing economic growth in the area.</p>
Transport facilitates the efficient movement of people and freight to grow Queensland's economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable the movement of goods and people cost-effectively, reliably and quickly • Reduce the impact of network disruption • Provide access to important centres of economic activity in regions and cities • Maintain high quality standards of service and delivery without onerous compliance 	<p>These roads provide key access for commercial (including Type 2 road trains) vehicles accessing remote communities.</p>
Transport is safe and secure for customers and goods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Queensland Government will aim to reduce the rate of transport related fatalities and injuries 	<p>The projects improved road users' experience by sealing sections of road to provide overtaking opportunities.</p>

4 Suitability of the work

The department advised that 'the aim of all the projects was to increase capacity of the road network by bitumen sealing to a two-traffic lane standard, thereby improving road safety on the state-

³⁵ Submission 4, p 14.

³⁶ Submission 4, pp 14-15.

³⁷ Submission 4, p 16.

controlled road network'.³⁸ Boulia Shire Council submitted that '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'.³⁹ The committee considered the suitability of the works on roads subject to this inquiry by reference to the functional requirements of the works and their functional, technical and environmental performance.

4.1 Functional requirements

The public works are required to improve operational functionality for local, tourist and freight traffic road users into the future, meaning they are required to:

- improve safety by reducing traffic accidents
- increase freight efficiency and delivery reliability
- improve infrastructure to meet DTMR standards
- reflect prevalent government priorities in promoting growth and employment to local suppliers
- consider environmental matters for legislative requirements
- optimise whole-of-life costs of the asset
- minimise impacts on the health and wellbeing of the local community.⁴⁰

4.2 Functional performance

The committee only received submissions with respect to the functional performance of the pave and seal public works, including line-marking, road width and flood mitigation. DTMR submitted:

Line-marking is not provided on the completed road segments as it deters from the overall strategy of maximising the length of pave and sealing for the funding provided. However, delineation is provided in the form of road edge guideposts and reflective markers secured to the road surface to delineate the centre of the road, required to be installed where visibility is restricted that is, traversing crests. Signage also compliments the delineation.

The predominant typical road cross-section of 6.0m sealing on an 8.0m formation is historically based in the Central West District, which again strives to utilise the limited road funding in providing maximised length of road upgrades. Based upon reduced traffic volumes for the non-tourism months of the year on the Birdsville area road network, vehicles can and do travel in the centre of the road due to no lane line marking delineation. For the high tourism winter months, coinciding with tourism events in Birdsville and surrounds, the width of 6m seal enables vehicles to pass by oncoming traffic (but not necessarily overtake) without fully shifting off the road.

The projects were designed to TMR design standards to meet TMR Road Safety Policy requirements.

Widening of the road to 8.0m bitumen seal on 8.0m formation has also occurred within the projects to manage drainage locations/floodways to provide for overtaking opportunities, strategically placed to reduce driver frustration when motorists are stuck behind long and wide vehicles for extended periods of road network.

The works at all project sites were determined as fit for purpose in terms of utilising the existing topography and remaining within the road corridor.⁴¹

³⁸ Submission 4, p 18.

³⁹ Submission 1, p 1.

⁴⁰ DTMR, submission 4, pp 17-18.

⁴¹ Submission 4, p 18.

DTMR additionally advised that the pave and seal public works undertaken ‘utilised the pavement material WQ35 material specification, which aims to deliver practical locally sourced road base material for use on Western Queensland roads’.⁴² The committee heard submissions regarding issues which had recently arisen with sourcing road base material from local gravel pits.⁴³ While these issues did not affect the construction of the public works subject of this inquiry, they do impact the ongoing maintenance costs of the public works, and are reported further at Section 6.1.1, Recurrent costs of works.

4.3 Technical and environmental performance

In terms of the road work components of the public works, DTMR advised that:

horizontal and vertical alignment was designed to achieve 110km/h speed zone requirements with a posted speed of 100km/h. Extended design domain was considered in various locations when standard design elements were not achieved, such as, sight visibility.⁴⁴

While DTMR considered the public works fit for purpose, other submitters raised concerns that the unsealed sections of subject roads impair their technical performance.⁴⁵

Diamantina Shire Council submitted:

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. 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.

Over the last decade, a significant amount of pave and seal works on the Bedourie - Birdsville 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. This road is also susceptible to wet weather and as of the date of this letter, the Bedourie - Birdsville Road has been open with no restrictions for only 10% of the calendar year so far.⁴⁶

We note that the unsealed sections of the state-controlled roads subject of this inquiry fall outside the inquiry terms of reference because they have not been subject to public works over the last 5 years. Notwithstanding this, given the volume of submissions that addressed these unsealed sections, we discuss these at Section 9: Actual suitability of the works.

DTMR advised that in terms of the environmental performance of these public works, the various criteria and standards for the design and construction included land use and planning, noise and vibration, air quality, water quality, hydrology, ecology, cultural heritage, visual, soils and topography, social and sustainability considerations.⁴⁷

5 Necessity for, and the advisability of, the work

The committee sought information from DTMR regarding the necessity of the public works and consideration of options for construction. The following sections detail DTMR’s responses and the views of submitters.

⁴² Submission 4, p 18.

⁴³ Public hearing transcript, Birdsville, 17 August 2023, p 2; Public briefing transcript, Brisbane, 9 October 2023, p 4.

⁴⁴ Submission 4, p 18.

⁴⁵ See submissions 2, 5, 6, 7, 8.

⁴⁶ Submission 3, p 2.

⁴⁷ DTMR, submission 4, p 19.

5.1 Necessity for the work

Birdsville is the only township in the Central West District located on a state-controlled road that does not have a fully sealed access. DTMR advised that its primary focus in carrying out the public works was the unsealed sections on the Eyre Developmental Road (Bedourie - Birdsville) as that road has the least length of unsealed road.⁴⁸ The Outback Regional Roads and Transport Group (ORRTG), which consists of DTMR and 7 local governments in the region, has collectively categorised the Eyre Developmental Road as an Investment Priority 1 road due to the significance of the link.⁴⁹

Boulia Shire Council highlighted the importance of this road network for connecting remote residents and ‘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’.⁵⁰ Furthermore, Boulia Shire Council stated that the road network also provides financial support for the communities in the district to council employees and local contractors. Boulia Shire Council concluded by stating ‘in remote locations such as these the interconnected relationships between the local economy and road infrastructure is vital and cannot be underestimated’.⁵¹

5.1.1 Options for construction

DTMR advised that its chosen sealing option for low volume roads in the Central West District, with evidence of its success over many years, includes:

- 6m seal on an 8m formation
- 8m seal on an 8m formation at crests, curves, and floodways
- no improvement to flood immunity
- low-cost pavement using best available local material.⁵²

While noting that the option for construction selected by DTMR does not include improving flood immunity, during the committee’s visit to Birdsville, we conducted an inspection of a non-state controlled causeway over the Diamantina River, downstream from the bridge on the Eyre Development Road near the Birdsville racecourse. The causeway has been damaged by various flood events, but it is regularly used by foot traffic during major events such as the Birdsville Races.

While this causeway is outside the terms of reference of this inquiry, being a non-state controlled road, submitters indicated rectification of the causeway would scaffold the efficacy of the public works that have been considered as part of this inquiry, due to the causeway’s capacity to facilitate emergency vehicles and foot traffic in the event of the bridge’s closure upstream. Heritage and environmental regulatory issues have been impeding the repair of this causeway for several years, despite its transit capacity.⁵³

During a public hearing, the committee raised the causeway with DTMR representatives highlighting the safety issues while acknowledging that the causeway was a council-controlled road and segment.⁵⁴

⁴⁸ Submission 4, p 19.

⁴⁹ Diamantina Shire Council, Submission 3, p 2.

⁵⁰ Submission 1, p 2.

⁵¹ Submission 1, p 2.

⁵² Submission 4, p 19.

⁵³ See, for example, submission 5, p 7.

⁵⁴ Public briefing transcript, Brisbane, 9 October 2023, p 7.



Diamantina River causeway during committee site inspection on 16 August 2023.

6 Value for money

DTMR advised that it considered various assessment criteria to achieve value for money for this project and defines 'value for money' in broader terms than the initial cost of a project. To work within the bounds of the Queensland Procurement Policy, DTMR considered the following:

- overall objectives of the procurement and the outcome being sought
- local content and local benefit objectives being met
- targeted Indigenous participation objectives being met (with reference to the Queensland Indigenous Procurement Policy)
- cost related factors including whole-of-life costs and transaction costs associated with acquisition, use, holding, maintenance, and disposal
- non-price factors such as fitness for purpose, quality, service and support and sustainability impacts
- opportunities to advance economic, environmental, and social objectives.⁵⁵

DTMR determined to engage solely with the local councils for the pave and seal construction contracts. TMR submitted this approach constituted best value for money procurement due to:

- the remoteness of the location and unavailability of an established contractor
- the local councils are already maintaining the road network as part of their existing Routine Maintenance Performance Contract (RMPC) and hence their understanding of road network management
- local councils have the expertise in the use of local materials with proven performance over many years
- availability of the local council to carry out the prescribed works
- enabling local authorities to keep their staff employed and opportunities for training on these projects.⁵⁶

Diamantina Shire Council submitted that in respect of their sole tender status for roads in their jurisdiction, Council:

Achieve[s] 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.

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.⁵⁷

6.1 Cost of works

Sealing cost per kilometre varied between \$260,000/km and \$650,000/km for these public works. DTMR advised this is related to varying factors including access to gravel material and site establishment costs such as accommodation, water supply and plant and human resources availability. Increased material supply costs during COVID-19 for pre-cast concrete culverts,

⁵⁵ Submission 4, pp 19-20.

⁵⁶ Submission 4, p 20.

⁵⁷ Submission 3, p 2.

reinforcing steel, cement supply and workforce supply also occurred, and an extended wet season for 2021-22 to 2022-23 caused some reduction in productivity.⁵⁸

The variance between the final contract value and original contract value was 118 per cent as an upper limit, with an average of 104 per cent, which is less than 10 per cent (nominal amount allowed for contingencies).⁵⁹ DTMR provided the information shown in Table 7 of the comparison between the original contract project budget for each public work and final contract cost.

Table 7: Comparison between original contract and final contract including listing of variations⁶⁰

TMR Project ID	Principal contractor	Original contract \$	Final contract value \$	% increase	Description of variations
1687978	Barcoo Shire Council	2,290,977.20	2,695,403.61	18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bitumen rise and fall (C170 & S35E) unsuitable subgrade replacement, wet weather delay rework and additional costs for sealing works
1999355	Barcoo Shire Council	3,481,644.70	3,591,223.67	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs associated with additional subgrade and formation works • Bitumen rise and fall (C170 & S35E) and prime, Bitumen increase in supply cost of pre coated 7mm cover aggregate
470262	Diamantina Shire Council	737,108.61	764,327.91	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional drainage works u/s and d/s of culvert
285273	Diamantina Shire Council	1,517,268.68	1,704,119.81	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addition of 2nd coat seal and bitumen overs/unders
670699	Diamantina Shire Council	1,062,686.34	1,055,492.70	-0.67	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bitumen spray/aggregate spread rates utilised were less than scheduled
883795	Diamantina Shire Council	1,152,711.50	1,152,711.50	0	Nil – N/A
1647774	Diamantina Shire Council	10,741,005.91	10,873,590.05	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carcoory Rest Area, additional floodway, additional culvert works
1687043	Diamantina Shire Council	4,123,136.78	4,123,136.78	0	Nil - N/A
2127443	Diamantina Shire Council	3,648,012.60	3,744,085.05	2.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bitumen rise, basecourse rework (damaged by public)

⁵⁸ Submission 4, p 21.

⁵⁹ Submission 4, p 21.

⁶⁰ Submission 4, pp 20-21.

TMR Project ID	Principal contractor	Original contract \$	Final contract value \$	% increase	Description of variations
1834565	Moodie Outdoor Products	187,000.00	203,400.00	8.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gravel pad for Telstra small cell V-drain and bin slab \$16,400
2085023	Telstra Corp. Limited	191,900.00	191,900.00	0	Nil - N/A
1834565	Moodie Outdoor Products	340,000.00	341,000.00	0.29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bin Slab added \$1,000
2085023	Telstra Corp. Limited	191,900.00	191,900.00	0	Nil - N/A
2085023	Telstra Corp. Limited	179,600.00	179,600.00	0	Nil - N/A

Diamantina Shire Council submitted:

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.⁶¹

Barcoo Shire Council advised the committee that its cost to construct an 8-metre-wide pave and seal was approximately \$3 million per 5 kilometre length.⁶²

6.1.1 Recurrent cost of works

Submitters spoke to the high cost of maintaining the subject roads due to high volumes of traffic using the roads to travel to iconic tourism events such as the Big Red Bash and the Birdsville Races, when such roads are primarily designed with low volumes of traffic. Recent access issues with council gravel pits are further increasing maintenance costs, which some submitters noted should realistically be less than roads in other regions due to the high quality of the underlying road base.⁶³

Diamantina and Barcoo Shire Councils provide ongoing maintenance of the pave and seal public works subject of this inquiry as part of DTMR's asset management process. Diamantina Shire Council advised that the majority of works it carries out on behalf of DTMR are maintenance activities, due to a large portion of the subject roads being unsealed.⁶⁴

DTMR advised its asset management process targets:

the highest priority needs and maintain the safety of the state-controlled road network. TMR focuses on balancing investment in capital maintenance with applying adequate funding for routine maintenance, to ensure that the network is maintained in a safe and serviceable manner.⁶⁵

DTMR explained its prioritisation process for maintenance as follows:

Routine maintenance, performance contracts, allocations are fairly stagnant and traditionally are allocated based on the asset, so the road length and the standard of the road. We measure against some identified intervention levels—the height of the grass growing, we want to mow it back, if there is an edge break on the bitumen road and the depletion of that bitumen surface.

⁶¹ Submission 3, p 4.

⁶² Public hearing transcript, Birdsville, 17 August 2023, p 4.

⁶³ Public hearing transcript, Birdsville, 17 August 2023, p 4.

⁶⁴ Submission 3, p 1.

⁶⁵ DTMR, correspondence, 17 October 2023, p 1.

Those are engineering requirements and intervention that occurs and that is what we use our maintenance moneys on. Additional to routine maintenance is program maintenance and that is where we do our reseal funding allocations. Again, we do some rehabilitation from time to time also from separate program moneys.⁶⁶

In terms of its current backlog of maintenance funding for roads subject of this inquiry, DTMR advised that as at 30 June 2023 there was \$569,000 in capital renewal investment needs for the road between Birdsville and Bedourie and \$30,591,000 in capital renewal investment needs on the road link between Birdsville and Windorah.⁶⁷ In regard to outstanding routine maintenance, DTMR advised:

In consideration of available information provided by the respective routine maintenance service providers—Diamantina Shire Council and Barcoo Shire Council—TMR has determined the value of outstanding routine maintenance on the road links between Birdsville and Bedourie and Birdsville and Windorah as at 12 October 2023 to be approximately \$5,309,501 (\$3,096,926 on sections in Diamantina Shire Council; \$2,212,575 on sections in Barcoo Shire Council) for the 2023–24 financial year.⁶⁸

OBE Organic was concerned about the need to maintain these roads immediately after events like the Big Red Bash and the Birdsville Races because of the absence of a complete seal.⁶⁹ Barcoo Shire Council advised:

The agreement that the shire has with the department of transport through our road maintenance performance contracts makes us jointly responsible for the good order of the road. Maintaining these roads represents an ongoing and expensive challenge.

...

Recently, after the Big Red Bash, council crews remained onsite to repair road damage for eight days beyond the scheduled allotment for that job, delaying the commencement of other works under council's RMPC. If this road were to have a consistent wide seal between eight and 10 metres, that maintenance and overall cost would in the long term [be] reduced. This is not to say that costs in repair and maintenance would be eliminated. Maintenance and repair would always exist on these and any other roads, but the constant and ongoing works to render the road safe would reduce significantly.⁷⁰

Also concerned about road maintenance and its impact on industry, OBE Organics submitted:

Outback tourism, the resources industry and the cattle industry have outgrown the existing road infrastructure. Our road infrastructure and road maintenance programs are not growing at the same rate as the Queensland economy under the Queensland Palaszczuk government. The onerous maintenance programs to maintain these unsealed roads has outgrown the local government's ability to respond. After a maintenance grade, providing you do not get rain, the conditions of the unsealed roads would historically be better for longer. However, because there are now thousands more vehicles, they are heavier and the vehicles are towing trailers and caravans, the condition of the unsealed road surface deteriorates in weeks rather than months. Birdsville is the only iconic town in Queensland without bitumen access. Our road infrastructure, quite simply, is being left behind.⁷¹

In response to submitter concerns expressed regarding the maintenance load created by the unsealed sections of the subject roads, DTMR advised:

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

⁶⁶ Public briefing transcript, Brisbane, 9 October 2023, p 8.

⁶⁷ DTMR, correspondence, 17 October 2023, p 1.

⁶⁸ DTMR, correspondence, 17 October 2023, p 1.

⁶⁹ Submission 5, p 3.

⁷⁰ Public hearing transcript, Birdsville, 17 August 2023, p 2.

⁷¹ Public hearing transcript, Birdsville, 16 August 2023, p 9.

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.

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.⁷²

DTMR continued:

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.

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.⁷³

DTMR concluded:

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.

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.⁷⁴

The committee also heard that recent restrictions on the use of gravel quarry areas because of native title and other rules and restrictions have drastically increased the cost of road maintenance on roads. Barcoo Shire Council advised:

Since September 2022, further complexities have been encountered with decisions by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries to only relicence 14 of Barcoo Shire's 88 endorsed quarry areas, aligned with an interpretation of the Native Title Act. Since then, council has worked with DAF and traditional owners to have 43 of the shire's pits operating under an interim agreement. This is a contentious issue for councils across Queensland, and real impacts on the cost of road maintenance are occurring due to the significantly increased distances to transport gravel. It follows that the ongoing maintenance of the roads, which is the subject of this inquiry, will see increased costs in the transport of gravel in the coming years unless this matter is resolved.⁷⁵

...

We have partial federal funding, state funding and our own funding. I am sure we cannot go back to the funding body and say that it is going to cost us an extra half a million dollars because we have to get gravel from somewhere else now. That will come out of our little savings account that does not have much in it. We are constantly being told to make ourselves as financially sustainable as we possibly can, and things like that happen where project costs are going to get blown out.⁷⁶

In response to this issue, DTMR advised:

TMR is obviously aware that the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries is no longer issuing permits for the quarries previously authorised under sales permits held by local government authorities without native title consent negotiated through an Indigenous land use agreement. Clearly we understand the importance of local government access to state owned quarry material to deliver their work, as well as our own work, under the RMPCs. We have been engaged and attending monthly working group meetings with representatives from DAF, LGAQ, Barcoo and Quilpie shire councils, the Department of Resources

⁷² DTMR, correspondence, 13 September 2023, p 3.

⁷³ DTMR, correspondence, 13 September 2023, p 11.

⁷⁴ DTMR, correspondence, 13 September 2023, p 21.

⁷⁵ Public hearing transcript, Birdsville, 17 August 2023, p 2.

⁷⁶ Public hearing transcript, Birdsville, 17 August 2023, p 4.

and so forth. It is certainly a priority issue as demonstrated by a meeting that took place with the Deputy Premier in August. We will continue to liaise with DAF, LGAQ and relevant councils and will certainly make it clear what our requirements are for local governments to deliver all of our works.⁷⁷

Committee comment

We note the significantly higher costs that local government authorities are currently experiencing to maintain their routine and unscheduled maintenance of roads the subject of this inquiry. These costs are avoidable and prevent local governments from being able to achieve optimal levels of public works. We ask the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Department of Resources to continue to work urgently with local councils and native title parties to resolve council gravel pit access issues in Queensland.

The committee notes that the additional maintenance costs being experienced on the subject roads do appear incongruent with submissions that suggests these roads should be cheaper to maintain due to the quality of the road base being used. The mayor of Barcoo Shire Council, Ms Jenny O'Neil, clarified this during a public hearing:

Mr MILLAR [deputy chair]: You get better bang for your buck out here when you seal roads because it is a good pavement to seal a road. Where I come from, in the Central Highlands, we have blacksoil and basically the road lasts only a finite time and you have to go back and do it again. However, if you seal these roads once then they are sealed and there is likely to be very little maintenance.

Ms O'Neil: I would have to agree. Once you go back to the Longreach-Jundah road subgrade and you get into that blacksoil, those roads do not last. If you go from Stonehenge back on that red cap rock country, you have great subgrade. To build a road on that you are good for a lot longer, I would imagine.

Mr MILLAR: Do it once and do it right.

Ms O'Neil: I do not know the exact time frame for how long it would last, but you can see that roads on blacksoil would not last like they would on this hard country.

Mr MILLAR: Do you think the hierarchy understands that philosophy out here, that if we seal that road now it will remain very cheap to operate going into the future?

Ms O'Neil: I do not think that would be incorporated into the prioritisation at all. I do not think that is one consideration of the subgrade, no.⁷⁸

7 Public value of the work

This term of reference considers the positive and any negative impacts on the community, economy and environment of the public works.

7.1 Community impacts

Submitters spoke to the positive impacts of a fully-sealed road into Birdsville as a result of a safer road. DTMR submitted that Birdsville residents should be entitled to expect a level of road service similar to that enjoyed by other Queenslanders.⁷⁹ DTMR and ORRTG both recognised the need to connect townships via a network of bitumen sealed roads, which is why DTMR did not conduct any community consultation in the pre-construction phase of the various public works.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Public briefing transcript, Brisbane, 9 October 2023, p 4.

⁷⁸ Public hearing transcript, Birdsville, 17 August 2023, p 7.

⁷⁹ Submission 4, p 21.

⁸⁰ Submission 4, p 21.

DTMR advised:

During construction, the local government authorities, as principal contractor, utilised various forms of communication to advise the community of the disruption due to the road construction. This included but was not confined to website updates, community forums with Councillors and advertising in hard copy.

....

There was limited disruption to the travelling public due to the utilisation of side tracks which maintain a similar level of service. TMR is not aware of any formal complaints in the outcome of the bitumen sealed road projects.

...

Engagement with key stakeholders including native title claimants and directly affected property owners was an ongoing process throughout the project. This strategy was implemented progressively throughout the project lifecycle including the pre-construction phase.⁸¹

Several submissions indicated that only fully sealed roads would deliver sufficient benefit to the community.⁸² Ms Jenna Brook, the proprietor of the Birdsville Roadhouse, submitted:

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. 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. 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. Living in this reality, we understand that freight costs are likely to be higher with transport companies having to navigate dirt roads; that sometimes supplies might be delayed due to road conditions; and that in some cases it may be many weeks or indeed months between resupplies. 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. It is not the one-in-50-year flooding event or the one-in-100-year storm that we are talking about here; it is the fact that 10 to 20 millimetres of rain can seriously impact on supply chains.

In 2023, Birdsville should not continue to be held ransom by the weather. Local businesses should not 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.⁸³

7.1.1 Travel safety

Submitters canvassed several safety aspects regarding the subject roads, though some of these concerns, such as vehicle damage and dust reducing visibility, related to unsealed sections which did not fall within the inquiry terms of reference. These submissions are addressed in Section 9: Actual suitability of the works. Aspects of travel safety connected to the subject public works include appropriate road signage and optimal length of safe passing lanes.

7.1.1.1 Road signage

Some submitters noted a requirement for additional safety measures like road signage to educate motorists about how to share the road with trucks and overtake heavy vehicles with caravans under tow.⁸⁴ In response, DTMR submitted:

⁸¹ Submission 4, p 22.

⁸² See submissions 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8.

⁸³ Public hearing transcript, Birdsville, 16 August 2023, p 20.

⁸⁴ See submissions 5 and 7.

... road safety is a top priority for TMR on these sections of road. We certainly have 30 educational signs in place on these roads. I think that the major challenge for driving on an unsealed road is probably the experience of the drivers and the load that they are carrying.⁸⁵

Specifically regarding signage, DTMR advised:

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.⁸⁶

7.1.1.2 Overtaking lanes

Submitters also canvassed the safety of the existing overtaking lanes on the subject roads. Mayor Robbie Dare of Diamantina Shire Council submitted that overtaking lanes needed to be longer for the following reasons:

When road trains are travelling from this corner carting cattle out, it is not one road train; it is always two, three, up to five maybe. Getting around one truck is hard enough. The best passing lane would be a 180-kay one that goes right to Barcoo, but we understand money is not that easy to get. We need definitely 10 kay, because you need a kay or two to catch them up. You are sitting back in the dust. By the time you catch them you have to get around them, and then there is another one. Unless they are every 25 kay, you have not got long to wait, but at the moment they are not every 50 kay. There are bits of bitumen there, but they are not overtaking lanes.⁸⁷

Regarding the optimal length and position of safe passing lanes, DTMR advised:

Overtaking opportunities are typically located on sections of flat and straight road widened to an eight-metre seal. As I said, we generally widen to six metres with an eight-metre formation, but, if we can, we do the eight metre. That would be sufficient to allow a vehicle to safely pass another vehicle, including the road trains, and also travel in the opposing traffic lane for a period of time, which is why overtaking opportunities are only allowed when it is safe to do so. The five overtaking opportunities on the Birdsville Developmental Road are between two to four kilometres in length—not five and certainly not 10. We have a strategy of implementing a minimum length of two kilometres where the road is already sealed or four kilometres where the road is unsealed and this allows adequate time for a vehicle's dust cloud to clear prior to an overtaking opportunity. Definitely there is a minimum of two and four where the road is sealed. The five that we have already done are between two to four kilometres in length.⁸⁸

In response to a question about whether the lengths of passing lanes are signposted, DTMR advised that they are signposted as overtaking opportunities but was not aware if their length was signposted.⁸⁹ The committee's Deputy Chair noted that the length is not signposted and raised the issue of dust created by large road trains and the need for longer passing lanes to ensure safer overtaking.⁹⁰

DTMR responded:

We definitely think in terms of minimums. We tend not to think in terms of maximums. We very much think in terms of what we can deliver for the funding that we have available, but I would probably also

⁸⁵ Public briefing transcript, Brisbane, 9 October 2023, p 4.

⁸⁶ DTMR, correspondence, 13 September 2023, p 12.

⁸⁷ Public hearing transcript, Birdsville, 16 August 2023, p 2.

⁸⁸ Public briefing transcript, Brisbane, 9 October 2023, p 3.

⁸⁹ Public briefing transcript, Brisbane, 9 October 2023, p 3.

⁹⁰ Public briefing transcript, Brisbane, 9 October 2023, p 3.

suggest that the safety of these longer length opportunities would come into consideration as well. You would have to have a certain road geometry and site distance.⁹¹

DTMR additionally advised:

Future upgrading of these roads will continue widening the road formation to improve road sharing between all vehicle types and provide overtaking opportunities.

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.⁹²

7.1.1.3 *Improved road safety*

Noting the competing views held by submitters regarding the safety of the roads subject of this inquiry, we sought information from DTMR regarding any datasets it holds on road accidents on sealed and unsealed roads in the Central West District. DTMR advised:

I do not believe the data will reflect truly that the sealed road will lessen accidents in the Central West. It very much improves the ride and the efficiency of getting between A and B, but if I could elaborate a little bit further: dawn and dusk is problematic—looking into the sun. We are still seeing accidents whereby motorists are being affected by the bright light low on the horizon and not seeing other vehicles. That includes, unfortunately, hitting cattle and obviously kangaroos and other wildlife. So accidents occur from that. Interestingly, on an unsealed road or a road with a lower speed limit motorists can be a little bit more cautious. When the road is sealed and it is a faster speed zone obviously they speed up and there is a bit more traffic that also is generated in that location. There are various reasons accidents can occur on a section of road and all accidents are attractors, as Ann-Maree said. The department has, over the years, also identified fatigue zones which are locations between townships where run off the roads or accidents occur more often and we have tried to target them with signage and the like. It is ongoing, from my experience.

I will just add one more thing: speed is the killer. Sometimes when you have sealed roads people just go faster. That is why it is not a really obvious relationship between seal and road safety.⁹³

DTMR supplied datasets to illustrate the rate of accidents on sealed versus unsealed roads in the Central West District over the last 5 years. This information is contained in tables 8 and 9 below.

Table 8: Crashes on sealed state-controlled roads, Central West District, 1 January 2018 to 31 May 2023⁹⁴

Crash Severity	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Fatal	1	1	0	0	1	0*
Hospitalisation	8	12	17	11	13	-
Medical treatment	5	2	2	6	1	-
Minor injury	1	3	1	2	1	-
Total Crashes	15	18	20	19	16	-

* Period reported is 1 January to 31 May 2023

⁹¹ Public briefing transcript, Brisbane, 9 October 2023, p 3.

⁹² DTMR, correspondence, 13 September 2023, p 10.

⁹³ Public briefing transcript, Brisbane, 9 October 2023, p 5.

⁹⁴ DTMR, correspondence, 17 October 2023, p 2. Note: Due to data reporting timeframes, only data for fatal incidents can be provided for 2023.

Table 9: Crashes on unsealed state-controlled roads, Central West District, 1 January 2018 to 31 May 2023⁹⁵

Crash Severity	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0	0*
Hospitalisation	1	3	1	5	3	-
Medical treatment	1	1	2	0	0	-
Minor injury	0	2	0	1	0	-
Total Crashes	2	6	3	6	3	-

* Period reported is 1 January to 31 May 2023

DTMR also provided data on whether prevailing road conditions were a factor in the crashes recorded in the above tables 8 and 9. Those road conditions encompass the following circumstances or characteristics:

- wet/slippery
- gravel/dirt
- pothole
- narrow bitumen
- rough shoulder(s)
- water covering
- rough surface
- crest/dip – view obscured steep grade
- narrow
- temporary object on carriageway
- roadworks⁹⁶

⁹⁵ DTMR, correspondence, 17 October 2023, p 3. Note: Due to data reporting timeframes only, data for fatal incidents can be provided for 2023.

⁹⁶ DTMR, correspondence, 17 October 2023, p 4.

Table 10: Contributing factors for crashes on sealed state-controlled roads 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2022⁹⁷

Contributing factor	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Alcohol/drug related	0	2	4	3	4
Involving drink drivers/riders	0	1	2	1	2
Involving drug drivers/riders	0	0	0	0	1
Involving alcohol impaired pedestrians	0	0	0	0	0
Involving speeding drivers/riders	2	0	1	1	1
Fatigue related crashes involving motor vehicles	7	7	3	2	6
Driver fatigued or fell asleep	3	3	0	1	3
Involving distracted/inattentive drivers/riders	3	5	6	8	4
Involving drivers/riders who disobeyed road rules (all)	6	7	10	11	7
Involving drivers/riders who disobeyed road rules (traffic lights/signs)	0	0	0	0	0
Involving drivers/riders who disobeyed road rules (fail to give way/stop)	1	0	4	2	0
Involving drivers/riders who disobeyed road rules (other)	5	7	6	9	7
Involving driver/rider controller conditions	5	5	2	5	6
Involving vehicle defects	2	1	1	2	1
Involving atmospheric conditions	1	2	0	0	0
Involving rain/wet/slippery conditions	0	0	2	0	2
Involving road conditions	2	2	5	4	7
Involving lighting conditions	0	1	2	0	4

Table 11: Contributing factors for crashes on unsealed state-controlled roads 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2022⁹⁸

Contributing factor	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Alcohol/drug related	1	0	0	0	1
Involving drink drivers/riders	0	0	0	0	1
Involving drug drivers/riders	0	0	0	0	0
Involving alcohol impaired pedestrians	0	0	0	0	0
Involving speeding drivers/riders	0	0	0	0	2
Fatigue related crashes involving motor vehicles	1	3	1	1	1
Driver fatigued or fell asleep	0	0	0	0	0
Involving distracted/inattentive drivers/riders	0	0	0	1	1
Involving drivers/riders who disobeyed road rules (all)	0	0	0	1	1
Involving drivers/riders who disobeyed road rules (traffic lights/signs)	0	0	0	0	0
Involving drivers/riders who disobeyed road rules (fail to give way/stop)	0	0	0	0	0
Involving drivers/riders who disobeyed road rules (other)	0	0	0	1	1
Involving driver/rider controller conditions	0	0	0	1	2
Involving vehicle defects	0	1	1	0	0
Involving atmospheric conditions	0	0	0	0	0
Involving rain/wet/slippery conditions	0	1	0	0	0
Involving road conditions	1	6	2	4	3
Involving lighting conditions	0	0	0	0	0

⁹⁷ DTMR, correspondence, 17 October 2023, pp 3-4.⁹⁸ DTMR, correspondence, 17 October 2023, p 4.

Committee comment

Submitters expressed contrasting views regarding the optimal length of safe overtaking lanes on the subject roads. We note that DTMR used national guidelines for low volume roads when constructing the pave and seal public works. However, DTMR also acknowledged the traffic on these roads increases as much as 2,000 per cent above the average annual daily traffic figure when tourists travel to major events in the region, and we also note the anecdotal reported inexperience of some of these tourists with driving to rural conditions and passing road trains and caravans under tow.⁹⁹

We also note that road safety on rural roads is not a new or niche subject. Queensland Parliament's Select Committee on Travelsafe published a report in May 2002 regarding its findings on Rural Road Safety in Queensland. Mr Jim Pearce MP, former member for Fitzroy and Select Committee Chair stated in that report:

While road safety has dramatically improved for road users in urban areas of Queensland in recent years, the level of improvement in the state's rural areas has been far less promising. Saving lives on rural roads is perhaps the greatest road safety challenge facing governments. And it is a demanding challenge. Rural road safety is fundamentally different to urban road safety. Many of the programs that work well in urban areas do not transfer well to rural settings. The roads are different, the culture and attitudes of the people are different and there is less assistance for motorists when something goes wrong. The driving hazards on rural roads include animal strikes, road trains and large combination vehicles, narrow dirt and gravel roads, soft road shoulders, choking dust, road closures due to flooding and the tyranny of distance — long distance driving on hot, often straight roads.¹⁰⁰

That 2002 report noted the same submitter issues about rural road safety that we have observed during the inquiry — concerns about the state of the roads, the apparent lack of adequate road funding characterised as the root cause of the problem, and the need for funding for road repairs and upgrades to gravel roads to a reasonable sealed standard and to widen narrow sealed roads.¹⁰¹

We urge DTMR to continue working with residents and local authorities, not only in Birdsville, Bedourie and Windorah, but in all remote Queensland localities, on collaborative approaches to reduce risks to remote road users.

Recommendation 2

The committee recommends that the Department of Transport and Main Roads should consider a) flexibility when applying national guidelines for low volume roads in areas that experience high seasonal levels of road use, particularly with respect to the width of seal necessary to locate additional overtaking lanes of sufficient length to mitigate the reported impact of dust reducing visibility, and b) the need for appropriate signage to inform road users of the length of overtaking lane available.

7.2 Economic impacts

Diamantina Shire Council highlighted the importance of the road network in relation to various industries in the Central West Region, stating:

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 majority of the tourists (83%) travelled by private vehicle, and as the

⁹⁹ Public hearing transcript, Birdsville, 16 August 2023, pp 2 (Mayor, Diamantina Shire Council), 15 (OBE Organic), 24 (Outback Music Festival Group).

¹⁰⁰ Legislative Assembly of Queensland, Parliamentary Travelsafe Committee, *Rural Road Safety in Queensland*, May 2002, Foreword.

¹⁰¹ Legislative Assembly of Queensland, Parliamentary Travelsafe Committee, *Rural Road Safety in Queensland*, May 2002, p 65.

road network becomes accessible to more types of vehicles through the construction of sealed roads these numbers are projected to increase.

...

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.¹⁰²

7.3 Environmental impacts

DTMR advised that the public works are located within a largely un-touched rural environment, with some small areas of environmental and cultural heritage significance. Overall, the project was assessed as having an environmental and cultural heritage low risk.¹⁰³ During Project No. 2127443, which was a pave and seal on part of the Eyre Development Road, there was impacted drainage flow-paths into adjacent properties at 2 locations. DTMR advised that ongoing rectification works determination is occurring.¹⁰⁴

8 Procurement and construction

DTMR uses its Transport Infrastructure Project Delivery System (TIPDS) to provide guidance for the procurement of works regarding developing the best delivery strategy, the tender process and tender eligibility.¹⁰⁵ DTMR explained:

A traditional principal's design with a benchmark estimate was undertaken for the pave and seal roadworks projects. This was utilised as the proposed construction agency was to be local authorities who do not have design capacity or the ability to manage this task. A construction contract based upon a sole invitee justification with the local authorities was utilised based upon workforce commitments and best value for the construction location. The contracts comprised a schedule of unit rates based upon a set of documents including plans and specifications and a schedule of items of works for submission of unit rates per items. An offer for the works was tendered, negotiated, and agreed to between TMR and the local authorities based upon the benchmark estimate as a guide.

The procurement mechanism utilised was a Minor Infrastructure Contract - Sole Invitee (MIC-SI). This Transport Infrastructure Contract is utilised for simple and low risk works and where traffic volumes are relatively low such as rural environments. The contract documents reflect a lower level of detail based upon the complexity of the works.

As per the contract requirements for all road projects, the Contractor (local authority) was required to submit a traffic management plan, environmental management plan, safety management plan and construction details to the Principal, TMR.¹⁰⁶

There was no private sector involvement in the funding of the projects.¹⁰⁷

8.1 Local content

DTMR used locally based Diamantina Shire Council and Barcoo Shire Council as Principal Contractors, allowing utilisation of their local buy arrangements.¹⁰⁸ As one of the local government authorities, Diamantina Shire Council was the constructing body for many of the subject public works, through a sole invitee tender arrangement with DTMR. The Council stated that it had 'the required local

¹⁰² Submission 3, p 2.

¹⁰³ Submission 4, p 22.

¹⁰⁴ Submission 4, p 22.

¹⁰⁵ Submission 4, pp 22-23.

¹⁰⁶ Submission 4, pp 22-23.

¹⁰⁷ Submission 4, p 24.

¹⁰⁸ Submission 4, p 23.

knowledge to undertake the works within a timely manner while maintaining the quality required given the remote location and limited resources within the region'.¹⁰⁹ Council explained that it used its own workforce supplemented with local contractors from the region, and that for specialist works that it was not able to undertake in-house, like bitumen surfacing or larger concrete structures, it went 'to open tender and awarded works in accordance with Council's procurement policies and the Local Government Act'.¹¹⁰ In regard to materials, Council advised that they are sourced from local gravel pits and water points and 'are of the best quality available'.¹¹¹ Furthermore:

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.¹¹²

The road projects were required to meet compliance with the Queensland Government Building and Construction Training Policy by meeting the requirements for direct and indirect employment for civil construction projects and the number of training hours supporting apprentices and trainees (new entrants). DTMR advised this was not able to be achieved due to low availability of human resources to trigger training requirements under the policy.¹¹³

8.2 Design consultant and contract administration

DTMR advised it undertook the planning and scoping of the subject public works described. The department also completed the detailed design task, except for the following projects:

- Project No. 1999355 – McMurtrie Consultant Engineers
- Project No. 670699/1647774 – George Bourne Associates Engineers
- Telstra provided design of the small cell towers (non-civil works).¹¹⁴

These design consultants:

... were highly skilled, providing engineering advice throughout all stages of the project. The team were on hand to provide specialist technical advice to the Principal's Representative and Contract Administrator at key times during the construction phase as required.

Overall, McMurtrie Engineering Pty Ltd and George Bourne & Associates Engineering provided design support to TMR and the Contractors which was reflected in the minimal design triggered variations for projects utilising the external engineering firms. The quality of the design documentation facilitated projects where there was no delay or disruption claims put forward by the contractor.¹¹⁵

DTMR conducted a restricted tender process involving prequalified consultants to select the consultants mentioned. DTMR Central West District were the contract administrators.¹¹⁶

8.3 Performance of the constructing authority, consultants and contractors

DTMR advised that the engagement of Barcoo Shire Council and Diamantina Shire Council workforces for the public works constituted best value for money procurement due to:

¹⁰⁹ Submission 3, p 3.

¹¹⁰ Submission 3, p 3.

¹¹¹ Submission 3, p 3.

¹¹² Submission 3, p 3.

¹¹³ Submission 4, p 24.

¹¹⁴ Submission 4, p 24.

¹¹⁵ Submission 4, p 25.

¹¹⁶ Submission 4, p 25.

- the remoteness of the location and unavailability of established contractors
- both Councils having the experience of completing similar works within the Central West District
- both Councils being available to undertake the works within the required timeframes and budget to the required quality standards.¹¹⁷

DTMR concluded:

The projects were completed to TMR's expectations, with all achieving Practical Completion status for the works. All projects were managed within project/program budgets and delivered in a timely manner, except where wet weather impacted the completion date.

The projects met their contractual obligations, utilising the local workforce to meet workforce commitments for employment and use of local business and supplier support, quality and compliance deliverables, stakeholder engagement, construction timeframes, resources, safety, environmental and cultural heritage aspects.¹¹⁸

Diamantina Shire Council submitted that its delivery of subject public works occurred on time despite challenges:

... 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.¹¹⁹

The committee notes that detrimental flooding impacts were raised in many submissions. These are discussed further at Section 9.4 of this report.

9 Actual suitability of the works in meeting the needs and achieving the stated purpose

The committee received one submission addressing the actual suitability of the public works subject of this inquiry from Diamantina Shire Council:

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.¹²⁰

Most submissions contended that the 3 state-controlled roads covered by the inquiry continue to be unsuitable in meeting the needs of residents, businesses and tourists, and do not achieve the stated purposes specified by DTMR, namely: reducing maintenance costs; improving road safety, freight efficiency, flood resilience and reliability of the network; and supporting growth, productivity and jobs in the far western centre. These matters are addressed in the sections below.

9.1 Unsuitable length of seal

Submissions regarding the sealing of presently unsealed sections of the subject roads relate to detrimental impacts to local communities and businesses of not having fully-sealed access and safety impacts.

¹¹⁷ Submission 4, p 24.

¹¹⁸ Submission 4, p 25.

¹¹⁹ Submission 3, p 4.

¹²⁰ Submission 3, p 4.

Diamantina Shire Council submitted:

... additional funding is required to completely seal Bedourie - Birdsville. 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 1 km 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.¹²¹

Mayor O'Neill of Barcoo Shire Council submitted that Council:

... hears about the challenges people face due to the inconsistent build of the road. Council road crews regularly travel the roads to check for damage and effect minor repairs. I ask that efforts be made to: expedite a consistent eight- to 10-metre sealed road from Windorah to Birdsville and Windorah to Bedourie; upgrade the roadway in known areas of consistent flooding inundation, such as the Farrars, to reduce the period of road closures; and fence in areas of high numbers of feral animals and/or stock without cost burden on local landowners.

...

It is my view, on behalf of the residents and travellers travelling through the Barcoo Shire, that both the Diamantina and Birdsville developmental roads should be safe and reflective of the high use they receive. The roads which are the subject of this inquiry are simply not fit for purpose.¹²²

In response, DTMR acknowledged the limits of the pave and seal public works that are the subject of this inquiry:

While close to \$15 million has been invested in improving and maintaining the state controlled road network near Birdsville over the past five years, TMR does acknowledge that there is more to do. The Eyre Developmental Road between Bedourie and Birdsville is now the highest ranked unsealed road priority in TMR's Central Queensland region. For the remaining 15.7 kilometres of this unsealed road, TMR is progressing two separate planning projects to fully seal the link, noting the technical and cost complexities involved with upgrading this last section of the road. This is due to its location within significant catchments of the Lake Eyre Basin, including the Cuttaburra Crossing, a permanent water hole and wetland on Eyre Creek. There are multiple concrete floodways on the approaches to the Cuttaburra section which will be considered as part of any future upgrade. TMR will continue to seek construction funding through various state and federal programs to deliver these projects and fully seal this road. For the Birdsville Developmental Road between Morney and Birdsville, TMR is completing planning activities for a sixth overtaking opportunity to be located around 220 kilometres east of Birdsville and is currently seeking funding for its construction.

...

Planning is underway for both the pave and seal and the upgrade to the main crossing. Projects have been funded under our Transport System Planning Program, so it is definitely a priority. The pave and seal planning project—the easiest one—is nearing completion, with the business case expected to be finalised in December 2023.¹²³

9.1.1 Safety risks posed by unsealed roads

Diamantina Shire Council submitted that a complete seal of the subject roads is required to reduce damage to vehicles and road accidents and provide flood mitigation:

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.

¹²¹ Submission 3, p 2.

¹²² Public hearing transcript, Birdsville, 17 August 2023, p 3.

¹²³ Public briefing transcript, Brisbane, 9 October 2023, p 2.

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. 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.

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.¹²⁴

Barcoo Shire Council submitted:

The Diamantina and Birdsville developmental roads are in part the main transport corridor from South-East Queensland to both Birdsville and Bedourie. This means that large-scale and critical transport is required and is constantly using the road. This includes both freight and stock transport to many rural properties within the Barcoo and Diamantina shires and supplies to Birdsville and Bedourie. The inadequate and inconsistent standard of the road presents dangers to all road users. The roadway is the cause of countless occasions of damage to vehicles including broken windscreens, tyres and undercarriage damage. Even the most experienced drivers on these roadways find them difficult. This is manifest for the many tourists and those who have limited experience on single-lane bitumen, gravel roads and constantly changing road widths.

Closures on the unsealed sections of the roadway are common and ongoing, particularly after rainfall. Even minor falls of rain result in road damage and frequent closures. Since August 2022 to the present time, there have been 25 full closures on the roadway between Windorah and Morney and 22 full closures on the roadway between Windorah and Birdsville. In addition, the roadway has had restricted use to four-wheel drive vehicles only on 17 occasions between Windorah and Morney and 28 occasions between Morney and Birdsville.¹²⁵

The Livestock and Rural Transporters Association of Queensland recommended 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’.¹²⁶ The Association contended this would 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’.¹²⁷

In response to concerns about damage to vehicles, DTMR advised that it had 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 5 years.¹²⁸

Recommendation 3

The committee recommends that the Minister for Transport and Main Roads considers urgent steps to pave and seal the remaining 15.7 kilometres of unsealed length of the Eyre Developmental Road between Birdsville and Bedourie to ensure that Birdsville is no longer the only township in the Central West District located on a state-controlled road that does not have a fully sealed access. In making this recommendation, we are aware of the significant flood mitigation that is required for the roads subject of this inquiry and urge the Department of Transport and Main Roads to continue consulting with local landowners on the length’s optimal design.

¹²⁴ Submission 3, p 3.

¹²⁵ Public hearing transcript, Birdsville, 17 August 2023, p 2.

¹²⁶ Submission 7, p 2.

¹²⁷ Submission 7, p 2.

¹²⁸ DTMR, correspondence, 13 September 2023, p 7.

9.2 Better supports for community productivity and liveability

Diamantina Shire Council recommended that the sealing of the subject roads be completed to improve liveability for residents because of benefits including more efficient access to goods and services (including health services) and social and recreational services; consistent and reliable transportation to boarding schools (noting that Birdsville only has a primary school); improved community cohesion between neighbouring towns; and increased choice of transportation (avoiding costly air travel).¹²⁹

OBE Organics submitted that completion of sealing is required to prioritise the movement of essential supplies to Birdsville and neighbouring towns. OBE Organics provided the following case study that highlighted the impact of bitumen seal on community productivity and liveability:

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.

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.

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.

A bitumen seal on the Windorah - Birdsville Road, plus higher causeways would:

- improve trafficability in wet weather
- reduce wear and tear on tyres and trailers for vehicles and trucks
- reduce pressure on truck drivers with regards to fatigue management
- avoid the pressure on stretched local operators to serve tourists who are stranded in the outback, due to wet weather and inaccessible roads.¹³⁰

Mr Ben Fullagar, manager of the Birdsville Hotel, made the following submission regarding the impact of the subject public works:

They [are] important for probably the people that live here, because I certainly notice a big difference when I drive in and out, and I do 70,000 or 80,000 kays a year on the roads out here. For me, being here for 10 years—nowhere near as long as some of the other speakers tonight—I notice a huge difference. My trip is a lot easier than it used to be, but for the tourists, especially if they are first-timers, it is no advantage to them. The general tourist is not as resilient as they used to be. Even though you guys and our local councils have done a huge amount of work to increase and improve the conditions of our current roads, with the lack of resilience in today's tourists and society as a whole they think it is pretty bloody ordinary. We certainly see an improvement, but I do not think a lot of people travelling do.¹³¹

9.3 Insufficient telecommunications and emergency services infrastructure

Issues with telecommunications coverage, safe road widths and logistics for emergency services were also raised by submitters who maintain the continuing unsuitability of roads the subject of this inquiry.

¹²⁹ Submission 3, p 3.

¹³⁰ Submission 5, pp 6-7.

¹³¹ Public hearing transcript, Birdsville, 16 August 2023, p 30.

9.3.1 Telecommunications

OBE Organics identified in its submission the issue of UHF repeaters in the vicinity of the subject roads, which are a shared responsibility between the local government authority, the Queensland Government and private landholder depending on location. OBE Organics submitted that the Queensland Government should bear responsibility for maintaining UHF repeater networks as they are essential for public safety when travelling these remote roads.¹³² DTMR noted generally with respect to telecommunications that it is aware:

... large parts of the Central West District remain without mobile phone coverage [so] developed an initiative to help improve connectivity while reducing driver fatigue and improving road safety. 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.

In 2022, TMR arranged for the installation of six Telstra 4GX small cell units...

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. 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.¹³³

9.3.2 Royal Flying Doctor Service

Diamantina Shire Council advised that existing landing spots on subject roads are not compatible with the new upgraded King Air 360 aircraft currently being initiated for use by the Royal Flying Doctor Service:

There is only one spot on that road in the Diamantina shire that has been set up for the RFDS to land and there are turning nodes at either end for that plane to turn around—where the numbers are and the bars. That was constructed some years ago, and it was suitable for the RFDS aircraft at the time which are the smaller PC-12 models. They would not be able to land some of the larger aircraft that are in the fleet now on that particular spot, so they would need to make sure that they had the appropriate plane for that strip in terms of width. Certainly the RFDS were consulted in terms of that process of designing and constructing that particular landing area.

...

If you were going to do that project again these days, the RFDS are requesting a minimum of 16 metres wide. It is only 10 metres wide at the moment. The length would need to be at least 1,400 metres long, so we are talking wider and longer. The RFDS have a lot of requirements in terms of obstacles that might be in the road as well in terms of signage and guide posts. Obviously that is a consideration as well. Particularly when we are looking at locations that might be suitable to put a landing area, we need to be conscious of the terrain, trees, hills and that sort of thing as well.¹³⁴

In response, DTMR advised:

I am only aware of this in terms that it is the only section that has a 10-metre seal width, and it kept coming up in the proceedings, which is the minimum seal width required by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority and the Royal Flying Doctor Service...

There have been no conversations with the Royal Flying Doctor Service on future locations. The current location is a 10-metre wide, four-kilometre length. However, that would not meet the standards of today, requiring as much as, I believe, 14 to 16 metres in width as well as a longer length. I go on record to say the department paid for the extra width of the existing one out there with its own funds for that airstrip to be there. It really was an additional commitment that the department provided. There can be

¹³² Submission 5, p 8.

¹³³ DTMR, correspondence, 13 September 2023, p 16.

¹³⁴ Public hearing transcript, Birdsville, 16 August 2023, p 2.

turnaround points at the ends of these lengths of strips that could be looked into. Everything is on the table to be discussed further with available funds.¹³⁵

9.4 Inadequate flood mitigation

Despite the sealing achieved by the subject public works, the subject roads regularly close for lengthy periods when heavy rainfall occurs.¹³⁶ Arrabury Pastoral Company submitted:

Rain events lead to road closures which impact the movement of people, livestock and supplies.

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.¹³⁷

Mr Ben Fullagar from the Birdsville Hotel flagged a section of the Eyre Development Road right outside Birdsville as being particularly subject to flooding:

... we know that the bitumen is just not going to get laid tomorrow, so identifying those problem areas and making them a priority would be a huge advantage to us, starting from just right here at the Diamantina River, because that 400-metre section goes underwater. You could have the road totally bitumened between here and Windorah and you could drive out there in a Toyota Corolla and you will get to the racetrack and you will not get to Birdsville. The starting point is right there at the end of this street. The biggest financial impact for us is the first 400 metres to a kilometre from the town grid.¹³⁸

Ms Jenna Brook from the Birdsville Roadhouse submitted:

I think there are some critical points on the road to Windorah where rain often causes the road to close. They might not be very long sections. The creeks near Windorah are already sealed but they come up, close the road for a couple of days and go down again because they have a deep section in them. A couple of detours they have used over the last couple of years have caused a lot of strife, particularly to heavy vehicles. Then there are a few other sections between here and where the bitumen starts proper. For me as a business owner—obviously safety is paramount—what I would like to see is the areas that are most likely to flood and most at risk of closing the road to be the focus.¹³⁹

DTMR acknowledged the impact on the subject roads from flooding:

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....

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.¹⁴⁰

Submitters recommended the raising of the subject roads where they cross creeks, by way of box culverts, to ensure the subject roads remain open during rain events.¹⁴¹ In respect of specific mitigation measures it has employed on the subject roads, DTMR advised:

The Cuttaburra Crossing, which is five kilometres in length, already has some culverts in that section and the department would be looking to undertake sufficient planning to understand how many more culverts could be installed. The important aspect is to not hold back the water so that the water can

¹³⁵ Public briefing transcript, Brisbane, 9 October 2023, p 4.

¹³⁶ See submissions 3 and 5.

¹³⁷ Submission 6, p 1.

¹³⁸ Public hearing transcript, Birdsville, 16 August 2023, p 29.

¹³⁹ Public hearing transcript, Birdsville, 16 August 2023, p 25.

¹⁴⁰ DTMR, correspondence, 13 September 2023, p 4.

¹⁴¹ See submissions 3, 5 and 6.

sufficiently cross the road or get through to the other side, which is required by the property owners with their dams downstream of the location of Cuttaburra. The debris that is delivered when Eyre Creek is in flood is problematic because it can clog up the culverts, albeit that they are very low height culverts. We will be looking to consult with the community—particularly Diamantina shire and their reps who have knowledge of the location—so that we can be informed of the standing water height of that section and know what height we can deliver and subsequently the culverts to be installed through there.¹⁴²

...

[Another] example is on the Bedourie to Birdsville road where we have utilised the Lake Machattie road as a bypass around the Cuttaburra Crossing section. We have actually deployed a council road to get traffic around a known wet spot.¹⁴³

DTMR additionally noted the objective of flood mitigation as follows:

... 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 small culverts to upgraded channel crossings and larger culverts or bridges to manage standing water and average rain events.¹⁴⁴

Committee comment

We note that the design option selected by DTMR for the subject pave and seal projects does not include improved flood immunity, but nonetheless it is apparent that DTMR is working with stakeholders to determine the most feasible and effective mitigations in relation to the amount of time the subject roads are closed because of rain events. We note Recommendation 3 of this report regarding working with local landowners to implement the most effective flood immunity measures.

¹⁴² Public briefing transcript, Brisbane, 9 October 2023, p 2.

¹⁴³ Public briefing transcript, Brisbane, 9 October 2023, p 7.

¹⁴⁴ DTMR, correspondence, 13 September 2023, p 10.

Appendix A – Submitters

Sub #	Submitter
1	Boulia Shire Council
2	Michael Allpass
3	Diamantina Shire Council
4	Department of Transport and Main Roads
5	OBE Organic
6	Arrabury Pastoral Company
7	Livestock and Rural Transporters Association of Queensland
8	Outback Music Festival Group Pty Ltd
9	Rural Organics Pty Ltd
10	Syngensis
11	Birdsville Race Club
12	Birdsville Roadhouse

Appendix B - Witnesses at public hearings

Birdsville, 16 August 2023

- Robert Dare, Mayor, Diamantina Shire Council
- Stuart Bourne, Consulting Civil Engineer, Diamantina Shire Council
- Francis Murray, Deputy Mayor, Diamantina Shire Council
- David Brook, Adria Downs Pastoral Company
- Tony Schutt, General Manager, Arrabury Pastoral Company
- Dalene Wray, Managing Director, OBE Organic
- Rodney McKellar, Cultural Adviser, Mithaka Aboriginal Corporation
- Don Rowlands, private capacity
- David Brook, President, Birdsville Race Club
- Jenna Brook, Owner, Birdsville Roadhouse
- Gary Brook, Managing Director, Big Red Bash
- Greg Donovan, Managing Director, Outback Music Festival Group
- Anna Appleton, private capacity
- Ben Fullagar, Birdsville Hotel
- Tony Schutt, General Manager, Arrabury Pastoral Company
- Greg Watkins, Private capacity

Birdsville, 17 August 2023

- Sally O'Neil, Mayor, Barcoo Shire Council
- Mike Lollback, Chief Executive Officer, Barcoo Shire Council
- Bill Pitman, Group Manager, Operational Works, Barcoo Shire Council

Appendix C – Officials at public departmental briefing

Department of Transport and Main Roads

- Ann-Maree Knox, General Manager, Program Delivery and Operations
- Gavin Hill, District Director, Central West District

Appendix D – Issues addressed in the departmental submission

On 23 May 2023, the committee requested a response from the department on the following matters as they related to the inquiry.

General

- Provide a description of the work including:
 - the location
 - the site
 - the existing facilities
 - an overview of the project
 - an overview of the work undertaken as part of the project
 - Detailed Budget, including funding from all sources, for the project
- Provide copies of:
 - the Department's Asset Strategic Plan
 - the project feasibility study and the business case for the project
 - the Project Brief
 - the Project Evaluation Report
 - the site plans
- Provide an outline of the major project time-frames.
- Provide a list of the major consultants and contractors for the project.

The purpose of the work

- What is the purpose of the work?
- How does the project align with the Department's Asset Strategic Plan?
- How will the project contribute to the Department's service delivery strategy

The suitability of the work for its purpose

- What are the functional requirements of the project?
- How will the work be suitable for its purpose in terms of:
 - location and site
 - size/scale
 - functional performance (eg. functional spaces, space allocations, space groupings and their functional relationships, quality and standards of the design and construction, circulation, access, safety, and security, and general planning and design)
 - technical and environmental performance (e.g. heating and cooling, lighting, plumbing and electrical provisions, materials, information technology provisions, equipment).
- What consideration, if any, has been given to future development on the site?

The necessity for, and the advisability of, the work

- Why is the work necessary?
- How was the need for the work established?
- Why was it necessary to undertake the project now?
- What options were considered?

- Why is the selected option the best one

Value for money likely to be achieved, by the work

- What steps has the department taken to ensure that value for money would be achieved with the project?
- How does the project represent value for money in terms of:
 - cost factors, including whole-of-life costs and transaction costs
 - non-cost factors such as fitness for purpose and quality, and
 - the advancement of government priorities.
- Provide benchmark comparisons of construction costs and operating costs of the project with other, similar projects

The cost of and recurrent costs of the work

- Initial budget and reasons for any changes in the project budget
- What is the whole-of-life Net Present Value Cost for the project?
- Provide a copy of the detailed project budget
- Provide a copy of the budget analysis for the project showing the budget outlays (both capital and recurrent), the revenues (if any) and the funding source(s) (including details of any financial arrangements).
- Provide details of any cost escalation, and the reasons for any increase.

The public value of the work, including the impact of the work on the community, economy and environment

Impact of the work on the community:

- What consultation was undertaken when planning the project?
- What are the social impacts associated with the project?
- What strategies and options has the department developed to deal with significant social impacts of the project?
- Provide a copy of the analysis of the social impacts of the project.

Impact of the work on the economy:

- How will the work impact on the economy?
- Provide a copy of the economic analysis of the project including:
 - the cost/benefit or cost effectiveness analysis, and
 - the whole-of-life Net Present Value or whole-of-life Net Present Value Cost for the project.

Local Industry Policy:

- How does the project comply with the Government's 'Queensland Charter for Local Content'?
- How does the project comply with the Queensland Government Building and Construction Training Policy?

Impact of the work on the environment:

- Provide a copy of the environmental analysis for the project

Environmental issues:

- Are there any significant environmental issues associated with the project?
- If there are any significant environmental issues, what is being done to address them?
- What environmentally sustainable design features have been incorporated into the redevelopment?

Procurement methods for the work

- Provide details of the procurement strategy for the project including:
 - The method used
 - The selection criteria
 - Who tendered
 - What they tendered
 - Who was selected.
- Why was the particular procurement system selected and what makes it preferable to other delivery options?
- Outline the approach taken to the selection and appointment of consultants for the project.
- Outline the approach taken to ITC procurement for the project.

The balance of public and private sector involvement in the work

- What work will the public sector and the private sector undertake?
- Provide an estimated cost breakdown of work by the public and private sectors.
- What criteria was used when deciding whether work should be undertaken by the private or public sector?

The performance of the constructing authority and the consultants and contractors for the work

- Is the department satisfied with the work of each of the consultants and contractors?
- Was the work completed:
 - according to specifications?
 - on time and within budget?
 - in accordance with contractual obligations?

Appendix E – Abbreviations and acronyms

Abbreviation	Definition
AADT	Annual Average Daily Traffic
committee	Transport and Resources Committee
DAF	Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
DTMR/TMR/ department	Department of Transport and Main Roads
LGAQ	Local Government Association Queensland
MIC-SI	Minor Infrastructure Contract - Sole Invitee
ORRTG	Outback Regional Roads and Transport Group
REEF	Regional Economic Enabling Fund
RFDS	Royal Flying Doctor Service
RTA TIDS	Roads and Transport Alliance / Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme
RMPC	Routine Maintenance Performance Contract
RSP	Road Safety Program
SRNU	State Road Network Upgrades
TCP	Transport Coordination Plan 2017
TIPDS	Transport Infrastructure Project Delivery System
TRSP	Targeted Road Safety Program
TTC	Transport and Tourism Connections