

Expansion of the Alliance

The Roads Alliance consultation paper – “Managing Queensland’s Roads” – was released in June. The paper is joint LGAQ/Main Roads initiative that seeks to generate discussion on the opportunities available for local government and Main Roads to more effectively manage the total road network in Queensland.

The intention is to build on the success of the Roads Alliance partnership by addressing capability and capacity constraints and resource duplication through enhanced regional collaboration or bureau arrangements that can:

- deliver increased productivity within available funding (more work per dollar)
- provide greater certainty in contract arrangements and support good road stewardship practice
- support local employment for both spheres of government and further develop regional capability in the roads sector
- better utilise total road delivery capability and capacity through local government, Main Roads RoadTek and the private sector
- increase local government involvement in a wider range of owner functions on regionally significant roads.

Three broad groupings of new stewardship and delivery arrangements have been identified for consideration:

1 Extended Regional Delivery Contracts

that replicate existing contractual arrangements between Main Roads and local governments but run for a longer term (e.g. 10 year contracts), and also encourage the formation of strategic regional partnerships for road delivery.

2 Road Management and Delivery Partnerships

where Main Roads contractually agrees to work with local government and/or the private sector in a partnership where authority, risk, cost, and quality are jointly managed (and owned).

3 Regional Road Stewardship / Road Franchising

where some agreed stewardship functions (e.g. planning, delivery, operations and maintenance) within a region are packaged and contracted out for a specified period.

Recognising there will be a diversity of interest, capability and capacity, it is unlikely one model (included or otherwise) will be suitable for all circumstances across the state. As such, innovative and open feedback on the value of each model is being sought to help shape the future policy direction taken by Main Roads, the LGAQ and the Roads Alliance Board.

Consultation has occurred via the Roads Alliance workshops. Additional feedback can be submitted until 19 September 2008. Feedback collated from this consultation process will inform the development of a formal options paper towards the end of 2008 for consideration by Main Roads and local government.



Key Initiatives



2007-08 PROGRESS

RRGs continued to progress LRRS program development in 2007-08 despite the challenges of the past year.

The program development task during this period was aided by the Roads Alliance Board's decision allowing RRGs to either:

- complete a full five-year works program in line with the normal Roads Alliance program development process
- or
- roll forward their previous five-year program, showing bulk allocations in the fifth year.

This flexibility resulted in an even split between the two options, with all RRGs successfully completing their works programs prior to the March 2008 local government elections. These works programs represent interim RRG programs and were published in the Roads Alliance Addendum to the Roads Implementation Program that was launched by the Hon. Warren Pitt MP, Minister for Main Roads and Local Government, in June 2008. Newly established RRGs will have the opportunity to modify the works programs during the coming year.

The Roads Alliance Project Team (RAPT) will release a revised version of the Program Development Tool in late 2008, with each RRG to receive training in time for the next program development period. In the coming year, the RAPT will work with RRGs to ensure that the works program development process continues to be a success into the future.

“Early planning and communication are vital to the program development process. To prepare the LRRS works program I make an appointment with the Technical Committee members to discuss the program for the coming years. From this discussion a draft is prepared for the Technical Committee to review and comment. By putting in a little effort up front, the program is developed ahead of time, preventing significant rush and keeping the stress levels low.”

John Corcut, Principal Engineer (Program Development & Delivery), Main Roads

Southern Downs Technical Committee Member



Road safety

The Roads Alliance has continued its strong commitment to improving road safety outcomes over the past 12 months. The identification of safety risks on the LRRS network is now an established part of the program development process. In this regard there has been considerable progress undertaken by all RRGs to improve road safety outcomes through the increased utilisation of NetRisk, the Alliance initiated proactive road safety assessment tool developed by the ARRB Group. It is now a mandated requirement that all RRGs undertake the Road Network Safety Assessment (RNSA) element of NetRisk within their program development processes in order to receive additional road safety funding. In the coming months the RAPT will work with RRGs to ensure the use of NetRisk is embedded within the program development process.

Road Safety Partnership Project

The Road Safety Partnership Project was established in late 2007 by Moreton Bay and Somerset Regional Councils, Main Roads, Queensland Transport, the LGAQ and the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia Queensland (IPWEAQ).

The Road Safety Partnership Project enabled the employment of a Road Safety Officer (RSO) within the Moreton Bay Regional Council area and the former Esk areas within the Somerset Regional Council area. The aim is to achieve coordinated safety outcomes across local government and state agencies. The project is being run through the previous Moreton Bay Coast and Country RRG.

The LGAQ, Moreton Bay Regional Council, Main Roads, Queensland Transport, IPWEAQ, Emergency Services and the Queensland Police Service have formed a steering committee to oversee progress of the project and provide strategic input.

The first stage of the project has involved working with stakeholders to improve coordination across the region. Over the past six months the RSO has undertaken extensive consultations with all stakeholders at both the regional and state level to gain support for the project and establish state and regional linkages across agencies.

Many local governments and RRG representatives provided their views on the capacity of local government to get involved in road safety issues during the road safety workshop at the Local Government Symposium in April 2008.

The project's community engagement phase commenced in June. Local residents were invited to voice their road safety concerns at shopping centre feedback booths during Road Safety Week from June 4 – 11 2008. The information booths were highly successful with over two hundred responses received. The information gathered from the community engagement will be evaluated and incorporated into the Road Safety Action Plan for the respective council areas. Community engagement events are also planned for Esk later in the year.

The Road Safety Action Plan will provide a comprehensive overview of actions and strategies that can be delivered by local government or in partnership with other agencies to improve local road safety outcomes.

Above:

*Road Safety Partnership Project
Community Consultation Booth*

An important element of the Road Safety Partnership Project is the NetRisk assessment of the LRRS network in the Moreton Bay and Somerset Regional Council areas. This has been undertaken by the ARRB Group. The data collected by ARRB will then be overlaid with road crash data to enable both a proactive and reactive road safety assessment of the whole region. Being able to access this level of data analysis will be a major step forward for the RRG as well as other key stakeholders and will assist in developing evidence-based strategic interventions. This component of the project has involved collaboration between Main Roads, ARRB, Queensland Transport, Moreton Bay Regional Council and Somerset Regional Council. It is a very good example of what can be achieved when agencies work together. The Roads Alliance Board has provided additional funding for the ARRB assessment and for a specific road safety related engineering project to be identified through the NetRisk and data analysis.

Expansion of the Road Safety Partnership Project to other local government areas will be considered depending on the outcomes achieved.



Joint Purchasing and Resource Sharing

Progress for many RRGs on Roads Alliance JP&RS initiatives was constrained over the past 12 months due to the required focus for many local governments on the implementation of Local Government Reform. However, some significant initiatives were advanced.

In particular the two RRGs unaffected by Local Government Reform – North West Queensland and Brisbane – have made good progress.

The North West Queensland RRG consolidated its JP&RS capacity through the appointment of a part-time technical support officer. The officer works to identify opportunities for resource sharing across the region, one successful example being the Riversleigh Road project. Riversleigh Road is a LRRS road connecting Mount Isa to Burke Shire. The project was in danger of not being completed on-time due to significant staff movements and difficulties experienced in recruiting replacements for vacant positions by Mt Isa City Council. This problem was raised at an RRG Technical Committee meeting, through which an alternative delivery strategy was identified. This involved Burke Shire undertaking the upgrading works in conjunction with other road works in the area for Mt Isa City Council.

The successful partnership which completed these works provided the following benefits:

- The roadworks were completed and the TIDS funding allocation was spent within the allocated time frames.
- Mount Isa City Council's staff shortages in relation to the road works were temporarily addressed.

“Queensland road safety is a key priority for both spheres of government. The Road Safety Partnership Project characterises the principles of partnership and JP&RS, and demonstrates the significant benefits that can be achieved through collaboration across spheres of government.

We hope learnings from this pilot can be extended to other Queensland regions.”

Jason Deller, Moreton Bay Regional Council
Principal Engineer, Traffic and Transport



- Burke Shire Council was provided with a prolonged rural road works program and generated additional work and revenue.
- The project improved a regionally significant social and tourist link and delivered a safer road link for regional residents, pastoral interests, miners and tourists.

This project clearly demonstrates the benefits of the Roads Alliance, enabling members to combine funding and resource sharing initiatives to successfully complete works within their RRG.

Similarly, the Brisbane Metro Alliance RRG has also made significant progress in the development of new joint planning and JP&RS approaches. The RRG is taking a more coordinated approach to road network planning through the identification of a number of specific joint planning studies. It has also established a sub-committee to drive progress in JP&RS that has been systematically investigating specific areas. Currently, the groups' sub-committee is developing opportunities for the joint purchasing of traffic signal hardware. This new approach has resulted in the closer cooperation between the purchasing units of both Main Roads and Brisbane City Council that has included the sharing of market intelligence.

It is anticipated over the next 12 months these arrangements will be strengthened and, where appropriate, be extended to cover other local governments.