



smarter thinking ahead  
**RIGHT LANE**

### Alternative business models – driving opportunities for innovation

Innovation provides us with the opportunity to think outside the box, create new ways of doing things, and improve service delivery based on future needs. In line with the board's objective to drive innovative approaches to road stewardship, the Alternative Business Models project was established to identify new ways for local government and DTMR to achieve better outcomes within current available funding, for the total road network in Queensland.

A consultation paper entitled, 'Managing Queensland's Roads', was distributed to all RRGs to generate discussion on the opportunities available to state and local government.

Consultation on the paper closed in late 2008 and a report outlining the key themes from the feedback was distributed in early 2009.

The key themes identified were as follows:

- capacity and capability development is the biggest challenge to the successful management of the state's road network
- attracting and retaining skilled staff is a common challenge to all Queensland road authorities
- available funding is not sufficient to meet intervention levels specified under Road Maintenance Performance Contracts or to maintain roads to expected levels
- DTMR and local government generally have a good working relationship but areas that could be improved include:
  - streamlining financial and approval processes
  - consistency between DTMR Regions
  - sufficient quality systems and practices
  - longer terms for budget commitments
  - more cross-training of staff and other resource sharing initiatives.

**The next step will be to test the feasibility of new stewardship and delivery models. The Roads Alliance Board has so far allocated \$100 000 to support RRGs piloting new models, the objective being to realise meaningful gains in efficiency, capability and quality through the programming flexibility afforded under a new model.**



#### Four RRGs have volunteered:

- FNQ RRG has engaged Local Government Infrastructure Services (LGIS) to evaluate their operations and identify opportunities for improvement.
- NQ RRG is seeking to transition stewardship responsibilities of state LRRS to local governments, to deliver greater efficiencies in the region.
- CHIRRP is investigating four strategies to improve operational effectiveness.
- The Outback RRG is moving to implement a bureau service to manage the programming, resourcing and delivery of road infrastructure in the region.

Over the next twelve months the pilot models identified will be evaluated for implementation within their respective RRGs. The board would like to express special thanks to all four participating RRGs for their willingness to develop and trial new methods of business delivery.

Following the release of the Roads Alliance consultation paper – ‘Managing Queensland’s Roads’ – and the state-wide workshops in 2008, the NQ RRG volunteered to participate as a pilot region for the Alternative Business Models project. As Chair of the NQ RRG’s Technical Committee, Neil Allen, Director of Infrastructure Services, Townsville City Council, is leading the RRGs involvement in the pilot project.

“The Alternative Business Models project will allow the NQ RRG to examine opportunities to improve the way state and local government jointly manage the region’s road network – not just the Local Roads of Regional Significance”.

The consultation paper has sparked rigorous debate among the members of the NQ RRG, resulting in additional models to those outlined in the discussion paper being proposed for investigation as part of the pilot project.

Far North Queensland RRG members meet to discuss the Alternative Business Models project.

**“THE MODELS PROPOSED BY THE NQ RRG WOULD RESULT IN JOINT MANAGEMENT OF THE ROAD NETWORK AS ONE INTEGRATED TRANSPORT SYSTEM UNDER THE STEWARDSHIP OF THE ROADS ALLIANCE. WHILE THE PILOT IS IN THE EARLY PHASES OF DEVELOPMENT, I BELIEVE THAT WE WILL DELIVER SIGNIFICANT BENEFITS FOR COMMUNITIES IN THE REGION!”**



**Neil Allen,**  
Technical Committee Chair,  
North Queensland RRG.





# KEY ROADS ALLIANCE EVENTS

**FOR 2008-09**





### Roads Alliance Regional Road Group assembly

A biannual event, the Roads Alliance RRG Assembly is a forum for RRG executives and members of the board to discuss Roads Alliance progress. Held in Cairns in September 2008, and again in Brisbane in April 2009 the agendas at these events focused on road management challenges and opportunities, the future direction of the Alliance, as well as an exchange of information between RRGs about good practice initiatives being progressed across the state.

The board and RRG members discussed key issues including:

- board perspectives and outcomes
- opportunities arising from local government reform
- Local Government Act Requirements
- resource, financial and capacity challenges
- opportunities for new road stewardship and delivery models between state and local government.
- the new TIDS policy status
- the local government reform & legislative agenda for 2009
- capability assessments, capability plans and addressing the TIDS underspend.



There were also insightful presentations on the DTMR agenda, which focused on departmental priorities, delivery of vital services to communities around the state, road safety, responding to challenges and working smarter together. In 2009, representatives from two RRGs presented on their successes with the Road Safety Partnership project (Northern SEQ RRG) and the JP&RS initiative being conducted for the WBB RRG.

Thank you to all Roads Alliance members who shared their views and knowledge at these forums. A special thanks to Jason Deller, Warren Paulger and Ron Dyne who conducted presentations on the projects listed above, and to Clinton Huff, Executive Director from RoadTek, for his presentation on a cross-industry perspective of the challenges facing both spheres of government and the private sector.

### Roads Alliance Technical Committee Chairs Forum

On 12 March 2009, representatives from the board, the RAPT, former Main Roads Regions and RRG Technical Committee Chairs attended the Roads Alliance Technical Chairs Forum in Brisbane, to discuss key issues and future priorities for the Roads Alliance partnership.

Representatives from the Far North Queensland RRG, Darlene Irvine and Gerard Read, speaking at the Local Government Infrastructure Symposium.

**“I ATTENDED THE MEETING AS THE CHAIR OF THE FNQ RRG AND SAT IN A WORKSHOP GROUP OF SHIRE ENGINEERS, TECHNICIANS AND MAIN ROADS STAFF. I WAS ENCOURAGED BY THE PRAGMATIC PROFESSIONALISM OF THE GROUP AND MAIN ROADS OFFERED A NUMBER OF HELPFUL AND PROACTIVE INITIATIVES. THIS IS A SOLID RELATIONSHIP.”**



**Peter Scott,**  
Mayor of Cook  
Chair of Far North Queensland RRG.

The forum was well attended, with most RRGs represented. The forum provided an opportunity for Technical Committee Chairs to be informed first hand about the forward agenda for the Roads Alliance including the key priorities to be progressed by RRGs. The event also provided the opportunity for the board to acknowledge the good work of the Technical Chairs, while enabling the Technical Chairs themselves to discuss concerns and raise new ideas.

Discussions focused strongly on RRG capability and capacity issues and how the Alliance could support improvements in areas such as asset management, program development and JP&RS.

Open and frank discussions about these matters and many more ensued throughout the course of the day with the board and RAPT receiving valuable feedback from participants.

The board is keen to see events like this happen more regularly as they provide an opportunity for two-way conversations and ultimately enable the Alliance to operate more effectively. On this note, the board and RAPT would once again like to thank those individuals who took time out of their busy schedules to travel to Brisbane to participate in the forum.





## Engaging with Indigenous councils

Facilitating Indigenous council participation in the Roads Alliance has been a key focus for the RAPT throughout the 2008-09 period. Following the transition from community councils to councils (under the Local Government Act), Indigenous councils had expressed an interest in working more closely with their neighbouring counterparts and building internal capacity through the Roads Alliance.

Previously discussed at the LGAQ Indigenous Councils Reference Group in October 2008, and the subsequent board meeting in December 2008, the Roads Alliance Indigenous Forum was the first official gathering of Alliance officials and Indigenous councils. With all Indigenous councils invited to attend the forum, representatives from Cook, Wujal Wujal, Yarrabah and Lockhart River Aboriginal Shire Councils were in attendance, as well as a representative from the Regional Organisation of Councils of Cape York (ROCCY).

Held in early 2009, the forum provided a platform for board members and the RAPT to present an overview of the Roads Alliance, and to jointly discuss the benefits and commitment associated with Alliance membership.

## Opportunities

Following the forum, a number of Indigenous councils saw merit in taking a more active role in the Roads Alliance. Councils indicated that their interest in joining RRGs is based on commonality of interest and alignment of geographic boundaries. In addition to the perceived benefits in taking a more active role in the Alliance, councils were also keen to participate in the decisions around road investment priorities for the regional network surrounding their communities.

Throughout the April/May 2009 period, further discussions to engage with interested Indigenous councils were facilitated by the Remote Communities Unit, DTMR. With Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council invited to join the FNQ RRG, and the Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council invited to join the NQ RRG.

We welcome the Wujal Wujal and Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Councils into the Roads Alliance, and thank the FNQ and NQ RRGs for their support.

## Facilitating future involvement

Moving forward, the RAPT agenda will focus on the engagement of those Indigenous councils who have expressed a keen interest in Roads Alliance participation. Of particular note, Yarrabah and Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Councils have indicated interest in joining the FNQ RRG and North West RRG respectively. RAPT will focus on managing and holding preliminary discussions to facilitate their transition into that RRG.

Indigenous councils who would like more information on the Roads Alliance are encouraged to contact the RAPT.

# FUTURE DIRECTION 2009-10

While 2008-09 set the agenda for the Alliance, it is expected that 2009-10 will be the year where real progress is made by RRGs against many of the Alliance's key initiatives.

All RRGs will have Capability Agreements in place and will be working towards implementing the key activities necessary to improving their performance.

The JP&RS pilots will have tested the practicality of their ideas and will be able to report back on whether savings and efficiencies have been achieved, and most importantly, provided guidance to other RRGs about how they can achieve similar outcomes.

The State-wide Arrangement for NetRisk Assessment and Asset Data Collection on the LRRS will be well underway. As data is progressively collected across the state, RRGs will be in a better position to understand the safety and asset preservation issues on their LRRS network and make informed decisions based on better data quality.

The Roads Alliance Hub will be functioning and will be populated with data from the RRGs that have had their NetRisk and asset data collected on their LRRS. The board will be able to use the data in the Hub to report state-wide views about the inventory and condition of the LRRS.

The pilot studies into new road stewardship and delivery models will have completed their analysis and developed reports about implementing their identified models, with a real scope for substantial benefits.

The RAPT will continue to engage and collaborate with RRGs on all of these initiatives to ensure adequate support is available.

Additionally, the RAPT will review and develop where necessary, guidelines, processes and tools to ensure that the Alliance framework continues to be relevant to RRG operations.

Specifically, RAPT will be working on issues associated with the management and reporting of RRG works programs and on measuring the progress of RRGs in meeting the new Alliance requirements in the TIDS policy.

In summary, the future direction for the year ahead will deliver results in all areas of the Alliance. With a renewed focus from RRGs on the Alliance and state-wide frameworks in place, 2009-10 will prove to be a year of tangible achievements.

## Opportunities for staged expansion within Transport and Main Roads

The creation of the new department fundamentally aims to ensure all Queenslanders irrespective of where they live and work have appropriate transport choices and fair access to the transport system. Building on the long history of positive relationships, the Roads Alliance provides the grounds to expand and incorporate transport related initiatives across both spheres of government.

There is agreement in-principal for the Roads Alliance to be utilised to incorporate initiatives and services across the department.

Future expansion would need to broadly deliver the following outcomes:

- provision of a real impact from a regional perspective
- the state would need to be prepared to continue to transfer authority
- opportunities to combine activities and demonstrate value for money.

Initial work has already started in the area of road safety demonstrating how road authorities can move beyond the traditional role of road owner.

Future expansion will be communicated and supported by the RAPT.