

# Torres Strait Transport Infrastructure Plan

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**Queensland Transport**

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# Executive Summary

The Torres Strait Transport Infrastructure Plan (TSTIP) is intended to develop safe, efficient and sustainable access to freight and passenger transport services that meet the needs of the community. Key tasks of the TSTIP are to:

- Identify issues impacting on existing and future provision of transport infrastructure and transport services;
- Establish existing demands and community need for freight and passenger transport;
- Project transport demands out to 2026;
- Develop a vision and supporting plan in consultation with the key stakeholders;
- Develop strategies for the provision of transport infrastructure and services that meet identified community needs; and
- Identify appropriate technologies and transport infrastructure and service options required to deliver the transport strategies.

The purpose of these tasks is to address a number of transport issues which constrain the provision of a high quality transport network in the Torres Strait. These issues include the climatic conditions, low levels of private transport, few public transport options, high travel costs, varying quality of transport infrastructure and lack of a strong commercial market for transport ventures.

The preparation of the TSTIP included a range of planning, economic and travel demand investigations. To assist these investigations, consultation was undertaken to identify the underlying issues and potential solutions to transport problems in the area. Consultation included dialogue with key stakeholders such as Queensland Transport (QT), Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA), Torres Shire Council (TSC) and Ports Corporation of Queensland (PCQ), as well as issues identification workshops with government agencies, islander representative groups and service/infrastructure providers.

A number of transport options which utilised different means to address inherent issues and deliver quality transport services within the Torres Strait and to Cairns were investigated. These options were developed through a stakeholder consultation process and using demand analysis for transport services and infrastructure. The list of options explored was:

- 1) Option A – Continuation of current services;
- 2) Option B – Establish a second passenger and freight hub at a central island;
- 3) Option C – Hub and spoke arrangement for passenger transport by ferry;
- 4) Option D – Rail line from Cairns to Bamaga;
- 5) Option E – Option A with additional improvements; and
- 6) Option F – Sea transport proposal.

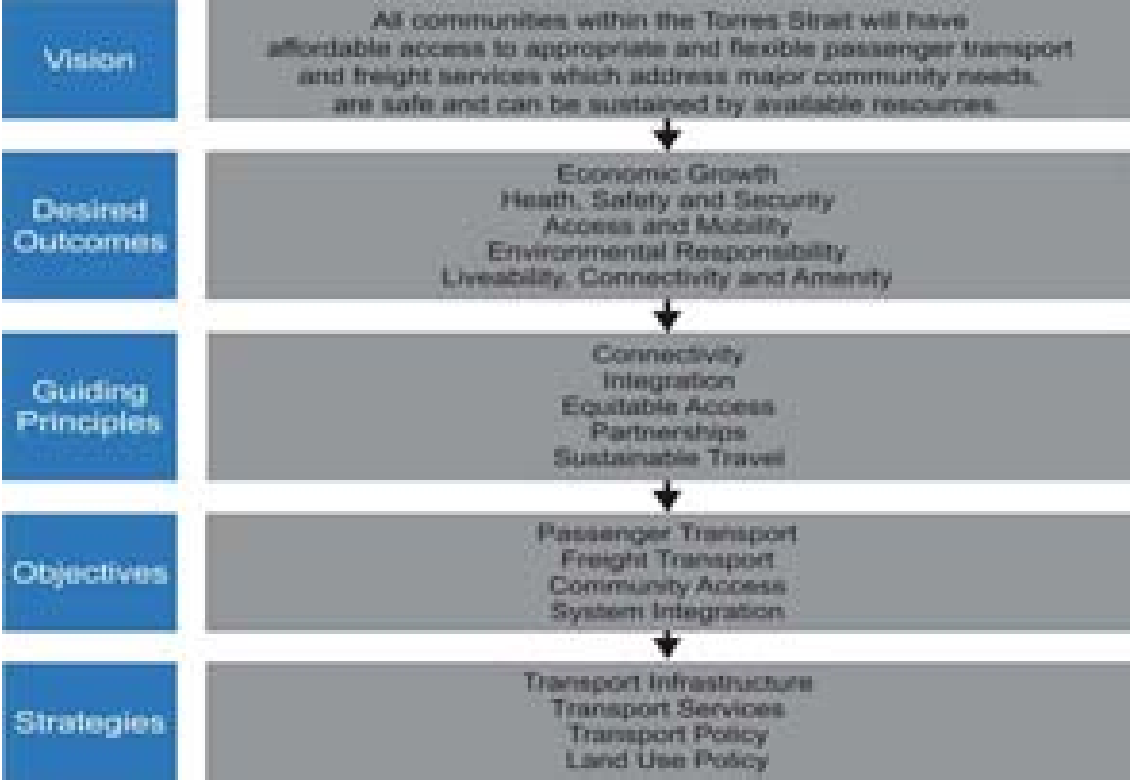
A multi-criteria assessment of these options identified Option E as the most appropriate transport option for implementation in the Torres Strait based on the following criteria:

- Integration;
- Accessibility;
- Connectivity;
- Serviceability;
- Cost of implementation;
- Affordability to travellers;
- Community development; and
- Environmental responsiveness.



The principles that underlay Option E form the basis for objectives, strategies, actions and priorities included in the TSTIP planning framework. This planning framework is intended to direct the implementation of transport service and infrastructure improvements up to the year 2026 in the Torres Strait (see **Figure E1**).

**Figure E1 Planning Framework**



Some of the key actions which need to be addressed in the short term include:

- Investigate means of reducing the impact of the cost of ferry and air services to the islands, with priority on OTSI communities;
- Establishing the need for Torres Strait specific regulations regarding small boat travel, covering areas such as safety equipment, fuel supplies, boat and motor design and maintenance;
- Undertaking long-term sea access strategy and consider dredging priorities; and
- Reviewing access for people with disabilities on ferries, buses, planes and at terminal facilities.

It is proposed that the implementation of actions associated with the TSTIP be overseen by the Torres Strait Transport Implementation Group, which will consist of key stakeholders involved in developing the plan.

Funding for the implementation and monitoring for the TSTIP is proposed to derive from a range of sources including federal and state agency contributions, programs and grants.