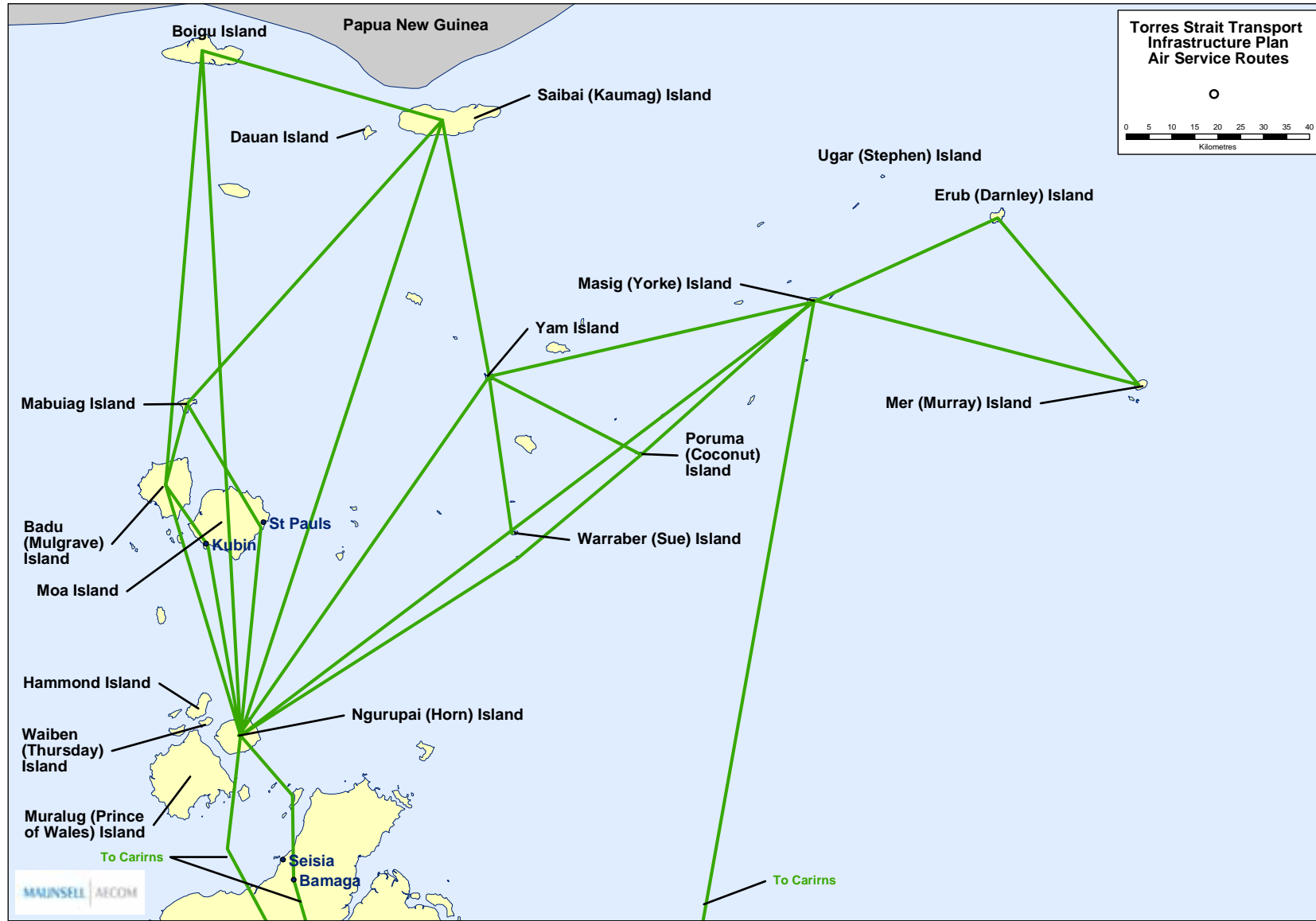


Figure 3.12 Existing Air Services



Source for Base Map: MapData Sciences Pty Ltd

QantasLink is the only contracted airline operating from Cairns to Horn Island (**Figure 3.14** depicts Horn Island Airport). QantasLink use turboprop Dash 8 200 series 36 seat and 300 series 50 seat aircraft. Two regional airlines (Aerotropics and Regional Pacific) operate Regulated Passenger Transport (RPT) services to the OTSI airstrips, whilst other air charter services are provided by light plane (three operators) or by helicopter (two operators). An RPT service is one that operates to a schedule and fares are based on the purchase of a ticket for a seat (eg the Queensland government regulated air service between Horn and Cairns, or the services operated by Aerotropics and Regional Pacific between Horn and the OTSI). The Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) authorises airlines to operate to RPT safety standards, where airlines must have each destination they fly to registered on the Air Operators Certificate issued by CASA.

Figure 3.13 QantasLink and Aerotropics Aircraft



Air services are mainly for passengers with personal items, and some small freight. Aerotropics are the agents for Australia Post and TNT Couriers, while QantasLink carry for Australian Air Express. Other operators carry out freight charter work, which also includes the movement of seafood products. Weight limits on freight are subject to passenger and baggage payload capacities.

Most flights are short-based in nature, with the average flight distance being 118 kilometres and costing \$200.

Results from the Air Travel User Survey, which was carried out as part of the development of the TSTIP, showed that 61% of all users had their trip funded commercially or by the government. However a number of the 25% of users that had their trip funded by a non-government employer would likely have the cost of their flight passed on to the government, as many of them are working on government sponsored projects.

Full results from the Air Travel User Survey are contained in **Section 5.4**.

Figure 3.14 Horn Island Airport



Air Transport Safety

Accidents, fatal accidents and fatalities for all Australian registered civil aircraft in the Torres Strait between 1995 and May 2005 is shown in **Table 3.2**. The accident and fatality totals for each year are then summarised in **Table 3.3**.

Table 3.2 Accidents, Fatal Accidents and Fatalities in the Torres Strait (1995 to 2005)

AIR TRANSPORT		1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005P	Total
High Capacity	Accidents	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Fatal Accidents	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Fatalities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Low Capacity	Accidents	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
	Fatal Accidents	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Fatalities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
GENERAL AVIATION													
Charter	Accidents	5	4	2	5	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	19
	Fatal Accidents	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	3
	Fatalities	0	2	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	6
Agriculture	Accidents	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Fatal Accidents	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Fatalities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Flying Training	Accidents	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Fatal Accidents	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Fatalities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Aerial Work	Accidents	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Fatal Accidents	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Fatalities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Private/Business	Accidents	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
	Fatal Accidents	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Fatalities	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

Source: ATSB 2005

Of the 23 air accidents that occurred between 1995 and May 2005, nineteen were charter plane, two were private/business flights, and one 'other aerial work'.

Table 3.3 Total Air Accidents and Fatalities for Torres Strait between 1995 and 2005

Year	Accidents	Fatal Accidents	Fatalities
1995	7	1	1
1996	4	1	2
1997	2	0	0
1998	5	0	0
1999	3	1	3
2000	0	0	0
2001	0	0	0
2002	2	1	1
2003	0	0	0
2004	0	0	0
2005 *	0	0	0
Total	23	4	7

Source: ATSB, 2005

* Data is current to 31st May, 2005

Table 3.3 shows that the number of air transport accidents and fatalities has decreased considerably over the years. Between 1995 and 1999 there were 21 accidents, however in the past five and a half years there has only been a further 2 accidents. Similarly the number of fatalities has dropped from six, between 1995 and 1999, to one, from 1999 to May 2005.

It should be noted that while **Table 3.3** lists the accidents that occurred in the Torres Strait, a number of accidents have taken place outside of the Torres Strait by planes flying to or from the region. Most notable was the crash on the 7th of May 2005 at Lockhart River, where 15 people were killed in Australia's worst air disaster in 30 years. The plane was an undertaking the daily route from Bamaga to Cairns when it crashed on the approach into Lockhart River. This crash had a noticeable effect on the views of study area residents in regard to the safety of air travel to/from and around the Torres Strait region.

3.3 Road Infrastructure

NPA Roads

Currently, the road linking the NPA to the south becomes impassable during the wet. The four wheel drive track leading to Bamaga is being sealed only as far as the section of road north of the turnoff into Weipa, which is state controlled road. The rate of sealing is slow, indicating that the road to Bamaga will not be sealed by 2026, but rather 2050. **Table 3.4** shows the anticipated progress for sealing the road from Cairns to Bamaga. While the section of road discussed in **Table 3.4** falls outside the study area for this report, this road link to Cairns forms an important access-way between the Torres Strait and the rest of Australia, and hence needs to be considered.

Table 3.4 Road Link from Cairns to Bamaga – Progress of Sealing

Link	Total Distance (km)	Condition at December 2005		Expected at 2015	
		Sealed(km)	Unsealed (km)	Sealed (km)	Unsealed (km)
Cairns to Lakeland	248.3	248.3	0.0	248.3	0.0
Lakeland to Laura	61.8	18.7	43.1	61.8	0.0
Laura to Coen	246.6	23.6	223.0	62.0	184.6
Coen to Weipa	219.5	31.9	187.6	55.0	164.5
Weipa to Bamaga *	206.1	0.0	206.1	0.0	206.1
Total	982.3	322.5	659.8	427.1	555.2

* Responsibility of Cook Shire Council. All other sections are the responsibility of DMR

The proposed future strategy for the unsealed section between Cairns and Weipa is outlined below:

- Lakeland to Laura:
 - Complete seal within 10 years;
 - No bridging of the Laura River just south of Laura; and
 - Carols Crossing and Ruth Creek to be bridged.
- Laura to Weipa:
 - Increase seal length to a minimum of 117km by providing sealed overtaking opportunities at a minimum of 40km spacing, and ultimately to 25km spacing;
 - Provide improvements to small watercourses with either culverts or causeways;
 - No significant flood improvements, i.e. no bridges; and
 - No major realignments

Inner Island Roads

Horn Island and Thursday Island have mostly sealed roads as they have the most number of private vehicles. However, many of the roads on Horn Island are unsealed which creates dust and health issues. For health reasons they need to be sealed. Roads on Thursday and Horn Islands also require improvements for intersections and speed controls to make road travel safer.

OTSI Roads

The roads on Yorke, Yam, Coconut and Warraber are sand and can be trafficked in any weather. Unsealed roads on OTSI can become difficult to use at certain times, especially the road leading from Kubin to St Pauls. Roads between the port and airport on all islands (with the exception of Thursday, Dauan and Ugar Islands) play an important role in passenger travel between the planes and ferries. In general, roads have been sealed to permit all weather access, to reduce dust related health problems and to facilitate freight movements between the barge ramp and key areas of the community, namely the IBIS store.