13 INTEGRATED TRANSPORT STRATEGY

Overview

The Gulf regional transport network consists of four transport systems: road, rail, sea and air. The Gulf region’s road network forms the principal transport links within the region for cattle, mining, tourism, freight, and passenger travel and for servicing the Gulf communities. The road network also provides connections to the southern and eastern centres of Mt Isa, Central Queensland, Townsville, the Atherton Tablelands and Cairns as well as a link to the Northern Territory and Darwin. The Major Transport Linkages Map shows the major internal and external transport linkages relevant to the Gulf region.

During the wet season and in the case of emergencies there is almost total reliance on air access throughout the Gulf. However, The regional air transport network is limited in terms of commercial passenger services.

The sea transport network is focused on the Port of Karumba, which provides barge services regularly to Mornington Island and Weipa. The port is also an export facility and houses a fishing fleet.

The slurry pipeline linking Century Mine to the Port of Karumba can also be considered a regional freight corridor. This pipeline will be one of the most significant components of the transport system in the Gulf region, carrying hundreds of thousands of tonnes of zinc concentrate to the Port of Karumba each year. Although the pipeline is specific to the operations of the mine, the Miscellaneous Transport Infrastructure Corridor may be utilised for other non-road or rail based transport purposes.

The aims of this strategy are to:

• improve and maintain the regional road transportation network, including linkages to centres external to the region for use for trade, freight passenger, emergency and community access as well as for providing key linkages with other modes of transportation;
• improve the air transportation network in terms of access for emergency services, freight and trade, air passenger transport as well as linkages with other modes of transportation;
• improve sea transportation facilities and services in terms of trade, economic development, freight, barge passenger services as well as linkages with other modes of transportation;
• explore options to improve rail transportation and linkages with other modes of transportation; and
• provide an integrated transport system that supports the social and economic development needs of the community in an ecologically sustainable manner.
Major Transport Linkages Map
13.1 ROADS

13.1.1 Issues

Few regional roads in the Gulf region are sealed. Traffic volumes are low, in the range of 100 to 200 vehicles per day for sealed roads. For unsealed roads volumes are generally about 50-60 vehicles per day for State roads and fewer again for Local Government roads. A high proportion of the traffic is heavy vehicles and typically comprises 20% to 30% of total traffic. No designated National Highways pass through the Gulf region. However there are a number of key routes, which are of regional significance. Refer to the Gulf Regional Road Network Map.

The Matilda Highway is sealed along the Burke Developmental Road from south of the Gulf region to Normanton and Karumba. This provides the following linkages to external centres:

- Townsville to Normanton via Julia Creek - 1020km.
- Townsville to Normanton via Cloncurry 1140km.
- Townsville to Normanton via Richmond Croydon Road - 1138km.
- Townsville to Normanton via Georgetown/Forsayth/Einasleigh/Lynd Junction (Harvey’s Range Road) - 770km.

While the road between Normanton and Karumba is sealed it is subject to extensive and regular flooding.

The road from Cairns to Normanton - which includes the Gulf Developmental Road - is predominantly single lane but is completely sealed from Cairns to Normanton (700km). The upgrading of the Gulf Developmental Road also provides improved access between Normanton and Townsville (770km) via the Georgetown / Forsayth / Einasleigh / the Lynd road system and the Harvey’s Range Road.

Etheridge Shire Council has proceeded to seal significant sections of the Forsayth to Einasleigh part of this linkage to ensure better access for cattle trucks along this route. Whilst it is not currently a sealed all weather access it remains open and trafficable for the major part of the year. Townsville remains a strategic point for the export of product from the region because of its deep-water port facilities.

Access roads to the two communities of Kowanyama and Doomadgee (with over 1,000 permanent residents in each) are unsealed and are impassable during the wet season. Given the nature of the access to these communities and the road improvements that would be required to overcome flooding, it is not likely flood free access could be achieved within the life of this plan. However, significant road improvements to decrease the length of time of closure due to flooding could proceed.

Other communities across the region also suffer intermittent isolation as rising rivers cut roads – this includes Burketown, which can be isolated for much of the wet season. Flooding of roads and wet clay and black soil sub-grades which limit their use until they dry out are the major factor in disrupting transport movements to and from the region.
Gulf Regional Road Network Map
**Road Freight - Goods and Services**

Road freight services are critical for the import of goods and services and the export of products and materials throughout the Gulf region. This is an essential service where the majority, if not all, goods consumed by the Gulf communities are imported. The *Economic Development Strategy* addresses the need for the development of industries and businesses to supply essential goods. However, in the short to medium term future it is likely the region will continue to rely heavily on freight transport to access most essential items. Table 13.1.1. (a) provides information on the Commercial freight services that exist in the region:

### Table 13.1.1 (a): Commercial Freight Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>Links</th>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gulf Freight Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane</td>
<td>Karumba</td>
<td>barge: Mornington Island &amp; Weipa</td>
<td>weekly</td>
<td>weather permitting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cairns</td>
<td>Karumba</td>
<td>barge: Mornington Island &amp; Weipa</td>
<td>weekly</td>
<td>weather permitting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuxworth and Woods</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cairns</td>
<td>Karumba</td>
<td></td>
<td>3x a week</td>
<td>weather permitting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cairns</td>
<td>Kowanyama</td>
<td></td>
<td>3x a week</td>
<td>weather permitting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bethels Transport</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cairns</td>
<td>Georgetown</td>
<td></td>
<td>2x a week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cairns</td>
<td>Croydon</td>
<td></td>
<td>1x a week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgetown Carriers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cairns</td>
<td>Georgetown</td>
<td></td>
<td>2x a week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q-Link</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cairns</td>
<td>Georgetown, Einasleigh, Forsyth, Mt. Surprise</td>
<td></td>
<td>1x a week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cairns-Karumba Coach Line</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cairns</td>
<td>Karumba</td>
<td></td>
<td>3x a week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QLink (Queensland Rail’s road freight operator) will continue to bring supplies from Cairns to Mt Surprise, Georgetown, Forsayth and Einasleigh. There are limitations in the service provided by QLink, including:

- QLink will often not carry certain items, such as building supplies. This has implications for the affordability and availability of permanent housing in the Gulf;
- There are inadequate freight storage facilities in the Gulf towns leading to damage or theft of goods which are left to be collected;
- Delivery is often cancelled if parts of the freight route are flooded or impassable, placing the communities along the delivery route at a disadvantage despite having sealed and flood free road access. This is particularly the case for townships such as Croydon.

Freight costs to isolated communities are high. Freight volume is relatively low and cartage distances long. There is little or no back loading potential to offset delivery costs. Accordingly there are few opportunities for reducing freight costs. High freight costs contribute to business overheads making it difficult to compete with prices in larger centres. In areas where road transport has to negotiate poorly maintained, unsealed roads, freight charges are further increased.
Lack of access to regular, reliable and affordable freight services has implications in terms of community well being as well as economic development. Access to basic food items, particularly in Aboriginal communities, at affordable prices is essential if nutritional problems are to be effectively addressed.

The major freight import routes are shown on the Transport Map and include:

- the Gulf Developmental Road from Cairns to Normanton and then on to Karumba to service the barge operations to Mornington Island and Weipa.
- the Karumba/Georgetown/Townsville link via the Kennedy Highway.
- the Matilda Highway linking Normanton to southern centres, Mt Isa and the Northern Territory.
- The Wills Developmental Road serves Gregory, Burketown and Doomadgee from Mt Isa. There is unsealed road between Gregory and Burketown and Doomadgee.
- The Burke Developmental Road and Kowanyama Road providing access to Kowanyama.

For up to three to five months of the year many Gulf communities are compelled to obtain basic living supplies through airfreight services at considerable cost. Roads to some isolated communities are not repaired until late in the year, often just prior to the beginning of the next wet season.

Karumba, Mornington Island, Aurukun, Pormpuraaw and Weipa experience problems due to the closure of the Normanton to Karumba Road during the wet season. The Norman River Bridge, on the Burke Developmental Road is in need of repair. (A new two lane bridge is to be in place by the end of 1999.) Deadman’s Gully is another section of the route which is subject to regular inundation, and works are due to commence in this section of road late in 1999.

The cost of total flood immunity on the Gulf Developmental Road between Normanton and Karumba is likely to be extremely high. (Department of Main Roads estimates that significant improvement to the Normanton-Karumba section - lifting the grade line by at least 0.6 metres - could cost approx. $300 million)

**Road Freight - Cattle**

Freight transportation is reliant on access to the key external markets including Mt Isa, Townsville, Cairns as well as southern markets. The Department of Main Roads undertook a Beef Cattle Road Transport Study in July 1998. This study identified the key cattle freight routes for the Gulf region. These routes are similar to those used to import freight to the region. Cattle are carted via:

- Gulf Development Road via Georgetown/Forsayth/Einasleigh/Lynd Junction to Townsville;
- Croydon to Richmond Road;
- Burke Developmental Road; and
- Wills Developmental Road to Cloncurry and to Julia Creek.

There is also live cattle export from the Port of Karumba (the Transport Map refers).

There are high cattle cartage costs due to road conditions and flooding that often delays or prevents access to markets and ports. This forces the Gulf pastoral industry to operate on a seasonal basis, rather than year round. This has implications for the economic development of the pastoral industry. In order to increase the length of the cattle season there is a need to reduce the period of closure of the primary cattle freight routes and to increase cattle freight options by improving road linkages internal to the region. However local roads will also need to be selectively upgraded to ensure cattle trucks can access the primary freight routes from the various properties.
Road Freight - Potential Horticulture and Cropping Industry

The future freight requirements of the potential irrigation schemes throughout the region need to be considered in any road improvement programmes. At this stage it is most likely that access to fresh produce markets external to the region will be the key consideration in terms of the transport network. Given the high capital cost of roads, priority should be given in the future to the development of cropping and horticultural areas in proximity to the existing road transport network.

Tourism

The Gulf attracts a wide range of tourists, however, the majority of visitors are those who can be classified as ‘self drive’ campers of domestic origin. The Transport Map identifies the currently used tourism routes.

The Gulf Developmental Road and the Burke Developmental Road carry high tourist numbers. However sections of single lane seal and poor road conditions combined with the road train traffic on these routes creates potential safety hazards. It is expected this situation acts to discourage a proportion of potential self-drive tourists.

Gravel and unsealed roads accessing major tourist locations generally limit use to 4-wheel drive or high clearance vehicles only. Most tourists in conventional vehicles avoid travelling on unsealed roads, particularly vehicles pulling caravans. Furthermore, it is a requirement of many hire car companies that conventional cars use sealed roads only.

The Tourism Section of the Economic Development Strategy identifies the need for improved east-west linkage along the Savannah Way between Cairns and Darwin as a priority.

Future tourism in the Gulf will require effective transport linkages between entry points, accommodation points and places of interest. However, the transport system is a significant component of the tourism experience and visitor perceptions can be undermined if transport services are deficient. Transport network improvements must be developed in a way that adds to the tourist experience of the region and does not detract from it.

Passenger Transport - Private Vehicle

In a region which experiences relative remoteness and isolation, improvements to the range of transport modes, and greater availability of affordable, reliable and regular transport services would improve the quality of life for Gulf residents immeasurably, particularly in terms of:

- attending and participating in social, cultural and sporting events;
- opportunities to enrol in regionally based education, training and employment programmes;
- access to health care, specialists and social services;
- improved access to businesses in the region;
- access to Government services including QGAP office;
- increased regional cohesion through opportunities to participate in region wide development programs and organisations;
- increase opportunities for community participation in regional organisations; and
- meeting family obligations.

At present there is a great reliance on the key external centres that service the Gulf region, including Cairns, Townsville and Mt Isa. Key centres within the Gulf region are likely to continue and expand their service roles in the future (refer Community Development and Planning Strategy).
Linking internal centres should be given as much priority as linking the region with external centres. This is typified in the case of Kowanyama, which has easier access to Cairns than to its main community of interest in the Gulf region, being Normanton. In addition, the western Gulf communities of Burketon and Doomadgee have limited access despite heavy interrelationships and dependencies between the two centres. These two communities also have difficult access to the service centres and communities of the central and eastern Gulf such as Normanton, Karumba, Croydon and Georgetown.

There is an overall need for improved private vehicle and passenger transport linkages between centres within and external to the region.

**Passenger Transport - Bus Services**

There are two existing bus services in the region. The Cairns to Karumba bus service provides a link between the Gulf region and the east coast. There is also a service between Normanton and Mt Isa via the Burke and Willis Roadhouse. The Transport Map refers. The cost of these services is considered to be high and may be a deterrent to more regular patronage.

Travel within the region as well as travel to external service centres is seen as part of a lifestyle that comes with living on remote properties or in isolated communities. However, not all Gulf residents have access to private vehicles and few have the resources to regularly afford public transport fares, which in most parts of the region is limited to air transport. There is a need to increase the range of passenger transport options throughout the Gulf region.

It is Government policy to provide public transport on a commercial basis, and increased emphasis is being given to private sector provisions of public transport.

The communities of Kowanyama, Doomadgee, Burketon, Gregory, Forsayth and Einasleigh have no access to a bus service. These communities lie predominantly in areas of the region without sealed road access. Until roads are improved, it is unlikely that bus services can be provided without substantial subsidies.

**Road Improvements**

The following linkages have been identified in the previous sections as being of regional significance and worthy of inclusion in a regional road transport network:

- The Savannah Way linking Cairns to Darwin.
- The Wills Developmental Road linking Burketon and Doomadgee to southern centres.
- The Burke Developmental Road linking Kowanyama to Normanton and south to external centres and the Townsville to Mt Isa railway.
- The road linking Georgetown, Forsayth and Einasleigh to the Lynd and (via Harvey’s Range Road) to Townsville - forming part of the shortest practical route between Townsville and Normanton (770km) for a major part of the year.
- The Croydon to Richmond Road linking Croydon to cattle fattening country in Flinders, Richmond and McKinlay Shires. This route also links Croydon to southern centres and the Townsville to Mt Isa railway, as well as providing a link for cattle to be exported via Karumba and Darwin.

A number of significant improvements will need to be made to various sections and components of the above road linkages in order for the benefits of the regional road transport network to be realised.

Table 13.1.1 (b) (over) broadly identifies the improvements likely to be required and lists the benefits that may result if the improvements were to be carried out. The Table excludes road works that have already been committed in capital works programmes such as the sealing of the Gulf Developmental Road between Normanton and Croydon.
There are considerable road improvements that would be required in order to realise the benefits of the regional roads network that have been identified. Alternative sources of roads funding need to be explored. The *Integrated Planning Strategy* addresses this matter in more detail. Even with substantial funding increases the regional roads network is not likely to be fully implemented until well beyond the life of the Gulf Regional Development Plan. Therefore priority works will need to be identified by Main Roads and the Local Governments as part of their planning procedures.

In this regard, the Department of Main Roads is currently preparing the Regional Road Investment Strategy to indicate the level of investment and affordable standards on state controlled roads in the Gulf region over the next 20 years.
### Table 13.1.1 (b): Benefits of Improvements to Regional Road Linkages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Road</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Burketown-Doomadgee</strong></td>
<td>• improve linkages for Doomadgee with the services offered in Burketown&lt;br&gt;• improve air freight servicing opportunities&lt;br&gt;• improve access to tourism, external centres, bus services and increased freight and cattle transport options as part of the Cairns - Darwin connection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seal &amp; flood improvement to reduce time of closure due to flooding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cairns-Normanton</strong></td>
<td>• minimise conflicts between cattle and tourist traffic&lt;br&gt;• improve freight transport from Cairns to Karumba&lt;br&gt;• improve access to tourism, external centres, bus services and increased freight options as part of the Cairns - Darwin connection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widening and selective seal improvements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Burketown-Normanton</strong></td>
<td>• improve access within the region by providing a direct link between the Western and central Gulf communities&lt;br&gt;• improve for cattle movements throughout the region and to the Port of Karumba.&lt;br&gt;• improve access to tourism, external centres, bus services and provide increased freight options as part of the Cairns - Darwin connection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seal &amp; flood improvement to reduce time of closure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Doomadgee-NT Border</strong></td>
<td>• improve access to tourism, external centres, bus services and increased freight and cattle transport options as part of the Cairns - Darwin connection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seal &amp; flood improvement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Normanton-Karumba</strong></td>
<td>• improve access to the Port of Karumba for the cattle and other potential industries&lt;br&gt;• improve access within the region. (Linking Karumba and Mornington with Normanton and to other transport modes)&lt;br&gt;• improve freight transport to Karumba and Mornington Island&lt;br&gt;• improve tourism access to Karumba.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flood proofing to reduce time of closure commencing with the Norman River Bridge and approaches &amp; Deadman’s Gully.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gregory-Burketown</strong></td>
<td>• provide an indirect sealed link between the Western and Central Gulf communities via the Burke and Wills Roadhouse. &lt;br&gt;• improve access to tourism, external centres, bus services and increased freight and cattle transport options as part of the Cairns - Darwin connection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wills Developmental Road seal, flood &amp; black soil improvements to reduce time of closure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cloncurry- Normanton</strong></td>
<td>• improve freight links to Mt Isa-Townsville rail&lt;br&gt;• improve cattle transport&lt;br&gt;• minimise conflicts between cattle transport and tourism traffic&lt;br&gt;• improve access to tourism, external centres, and bus services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burke Developmental Rd widening</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kowanyama Road Dunbar to Kowanyama</strong></td>
<td>• improve for freight transport and reduce reliance on air freight&lt;br&gt;• improve for cattle movements&lt;br&gt;• Improve access external to the region&lt;br&gt;• Improve access to Normanton for community and recreation purposes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selective flood proofing to reduce time of closure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dunbar-Normanton Burke Developmental Rd</strong></td>
<td>• improve access within the region to Normanton for community and recreational purposes&lt;br&gt;• increase freight transport options from Cairns or via Normanton.&lt;br&gt;• improve for cattle movements and linkage to the Port of Karumba.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flood improvements to reduce time of closure and works to improve the condition of the road</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Georgetown-Lynd</strong></td>
<td>• improved access within the region and to external centres (eg. Townsville’s deep water port facilities)&lt;br&gt;• improve for cattle movements&lt;br&gt;• improve freight transport&lt;br&gt;• expanded access for tourism&lt;br&gt;• improve links for the Gulflander and Savannahlander&lt;br&gt;• improve access to bus services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(via Forsayth &amp; Einasleigh) seal and flood improvements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Richmond-Croydon</strong></td>
<td>• improve for cattle transport to/from cattle breed and fattening areas and exports&lt;br&gt;• Improve links to Townsville - Mt Isa railway&lt;br&gt;• expanded access for tourism, linking dinosaur and mining trails</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Transport Map
### 13.1.2 Strategy

#### Desired Strategic Outcomes

- A regional road transport network with the following features:
  - improved access between the Gulf communities and to service centres external to the region;
  - improved road conditions on the primary freight cattle and tourist routes and decreased time periods over which they are closed due to flooding and subsequent damage;
  - improved road conditions on major strategic linkages such as that to the deep water port facilities at Townsville; and
  - improved road conditions between the key transport modes including linkages to the Townsville to Mt Isa rail line.
- Efficient, timely and cost effective movements of goods and services within and external to the region including the coordination of road and airfreight delivery during the wet season.
- A range of efficient, affordable and coordinated passenger transport services including Gulf centres, external centres and other transport modes that are accessible to all Gulf communities.

- Develop an agreed schedule of road works priorities to inform the Department of Main Roads Regional Road Investment strategy and the Road works programs of the Gulf Local Governments and Aboriginal Community Councils.
- Initiate a review of all road freight services in the Gulf in consultation with the service providers and the relevant Government including consideration of the following matters:
  - an assessment of demand for QLink services throughout the region and whether these services can be provided commercially by QLink or through a community service obligation;
  - consideration of freight subsidies to some remote regions; and
  - measures to encourage businesses and individuals within the region to coordinate freight orders and transport deliveries in order to minimise freight costs.
- Initiate a review of all passenger bus services in the Gulf in consultation with the service providers and the relevant Government agencies and including consideration of the following matters:
  - increased access to bus services;
  - improved bus linkages and other sources of Government funding;
  - sources of Government funds for passenger transport including subsidies;
  - improve and expand bus services;
  - improved quality and affordability and appropriateness of bus services particularly to Doomadgee, Burketown and Kowanyama as well as a link with the Mornington Island barge service.
  - the establishment of comprehensive and readily available information on bus services to assist in passenger access to services;
  - coordination of service timetables with other transport modes;
  - bus services for special events;
  - options for improving intra-regional bus services and appropriate interchanges with other transport modes.
13.1.3 Priority Actions

• Initiate discussions involving the Gulf RPAC, the Department of Main Roads, Queensland Transport, and the Northern Territory Government to identify opportunities for linkages to the strategic planning for the areas adjacent to the Gulf region.

• Support the development of the Regional Road Investment Strategy by the Department of Main Roads and the Gulf Local Governments and Aboriginal Community Councils’ Road Works Programs and ensure the consideration of the following road transport planning matters:
  − detailed feasibility investigations into road improvement options;
  − cost/benefit analysis between various road improvement options;
  − the total amount of roads funding available to undertake roads improvements in the Gulf region;
  − ensuring road improvements are undertaken throughout the Gulf region on an equitable basis to maintain existing roads employment programs and not to disadvantage employment opportunities in the road construction industry in any areas of the Gulf region;
  − ensuring that current road conditions are maintained and do not lapse as a result of the new priorities;
  − the primary use of the various road linkages in terms of freight, cattle transport, tourism, economic expansion, access to services and regional centres and passenger transport (private vehicles and bus services);
  − integration of road linkages with the other transport modes of air, sea and rail; and
  − consideration of the recommended road works priority actions in Tables 13.1.3 (a) and 13.1.3 (b) (over).
### Table 13.1.3 (a): Recommended New Road Commencements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Linkage</th>
<th>Actions Required</th>
<th>Priority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>High (0-5 yrs)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savannah Way (Burketown-Doomadgee)</td>
<td>seal and improve flood ways to reduce time of closure</td>
<td>commence selected seal and flood improvements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wills Developmental Road (Gregory-Burketown)</td>
<td>seal and improvements to reduce time of closure</td>
<td>commence selected seal and flood improvements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savannah Way (Burketown-Normanton)</td>
<td>seal and improvements to reduce time of closure</td>
<td>commence feasibility study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savannah Way (Doomadgee-NT border)</td>
<td>seal and floodway improvements.</td>
<td>feasibility study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burke Developmental Road (Dunbar-Normanton)</td>
<td>seal &amp; floodway improvements to reduce time of closure</td>
<td>commence feasibility study for lime stabilisation &amp; fabric seal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kowanyama Road</td>
<td>seal &amp; floodway improvements to reduce time of closure</td>
<td>commence feasibility study</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 13.1.3 (b): Recommended maintenance and Improvements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Linkage</th>
<th>Actions Required</th>
<th>Priority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>High (0-5 yrs)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savannah Way (Cairns-Normanton)</td>
<td>selective widening</td>
<td>commence selective widening every 10km to 20km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matilda Highway (Normanton-Karumba)</td>
<td>selective floodway improvements to reduce time of closure.</td>
<td>feasibility study &amp; commence selected flood improvements including bridgework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burke Developmental Road (Cloncurry-Normanton)</td>
<td>selective widening</td>
<td>commence selective widening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgetown-Lynd (via Forsayth, Einasleigh)</td>
<td>general improvements</td>
<td>feasibility study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richmond-Croydon</td>
<td>general improvements</td>
<td>feasibility study</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
13.2 AIR TRANSPORT

13.2.1 Issues

The Transport Map identifies the primary airports throughout the Gulf region. There is also a network of privately owned and maintained airstrips, mostly on pastoral properties. This network provides critical access for emergency services and supplies, where strips are maintained. Table 13.2.1 shows the primary public airport facilities in the Gulf.

For much of the year air transport is the only form of access to a number of communities. The Aviation Plan for Queensland identifies that certain regions in Queensland have special needs that are not provided for by existing infrastructure. The plan enables Government to set further priorities for improving air transport support for regional development and access for rural and remote communities. As part of the development of the Aviation Plan, an audit of the capabilities of existing infrastructure was completed. This information is now maintained by Queensland Transport in a database to assist in planning for future community and industry needs. It is available to air operators, local government, and airport owners and freight forwarders.

Responsibility for funding aviation infrastructure rests with airport owners in the first instance. Where there is a funding shortfall, proposals may be considered for supplementary funding by Queensland Transport through the Rural and Remote Airport Development Program. Two types of proposals are eligible under the program:

- Basic Access proposals are primarily aimed at improving safe access to basic air services, including emergency services, and
- Regional Development proposals are those that contribute to regional economic development consistent with government endorsed strategies.

It should be a longer-term priority for the Gulf airstrips to be developed to a consistent user standard. This will facilitate more effective air transport services by being able to access all major strips with single size aircraft for both freight and passenger services.

Table 13.2.1: Airports In The Gulf

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Airport</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Surface</th>
<th>Night Lights</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burketown</td>
<td>1372</td>
<td>Sealed</td>
<td>PAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croydon</td>
<td>1463</td>
<td>Gravel</td>
<td>PAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doomadgee</td>
<td>1656</td>
<td>Sealed</td>
<td>EO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Einasleigh</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>Gravel</td>
<td>EO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forsayth</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>Gravel</td>
<td>EO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgetown</td>
<td>1138</td>
<td>Sealed</td>
<td>PAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gregory</td>
<td>1180</td>
<td>Gravel (Fair)</td>
<td>EO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karumba</td>
<td>1271</td>
<td>Gravel (Fair)</td>
<td>PAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kowanyama</td>
<td>1380</td>
<td>Sealed</td>
<td>PAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mornington Island</td>
<td>1320</td>
<td>Sealed</td>
<td>PAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mount Surprise</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>Gravel</td>
<td>EO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normanton</td>
<td>1676</td>
<td>Sealed</td>
<td>PAL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PAL - Pilot Activated Lights
EO - Emergency Only Lights
Access to the Royal Flying Doctor Service

It is essential that the primary Gulf airports and rural airstrips are capable of handling the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) aircraft, particularly in locations where there is no other form of medical service provided.

The Croydon airstrip is in need of sealing and Queensland Transport has approved a funding application. Sealing is expected to take place in the 2000-2001 financial year. All other centres have airport runways capable of handling RFDS flights.

However, the Gregory airstrip is often inaccessible from the town during the wet season. An emergency airstrip has been constructed on the eastern side of the Gregory River on the Wills Developmental Road for use when floodwaters cut access across the Gregory River.

As the outstation movement increases there will also be a need for improved RFDS access in locations such as Raft Point on Bentinck Island and at Old Doomadgee to service the coastal outstations.

Rural and outstation airstrips are the responsibility respective owners. There is need for a network of well-maintained airstrips capable of accommodating RFDS flights throughout the Gulf region to improve access to emergency services.

Air Freight

Runway extensions are required at a number of locations to accommodate larger transport aircraft. This should enable a reduction in airfreight costs during the wet season. In conjunction with any runway extensions the runway pavement strength should be assessed and upgraded if necessary to accommodate heavier aircraft.

The Karumba gravel airstrip runs parallel to the foreshore and is subject to cross winds. In wet weather the strip can be closed and the shell-grit verge is used as a runway. A longer runway is required to allow larger freight aircraft in during the wet season. Karumba is by far the busiest airport in the Gulf and is regularly closed due to weather conditions. It is urgently in need of upgrading or relocation. Carpentaria Shire Council is investigating the feasibility of extending the runway at Karumba to 2000m or relocating the airport to a new site.

As Mornington Island is on the same freight/passenger route the runway at this location also requires extension. The runway extension needs to be coordinated so that the one plane can use both runways.

Burketown airstrip is too short to be included in the freight runs by larger aircraft and also needs flooding mitigation and erosion control works.

The airstrip at Kowanyama is also used to import freight during the wet season. Approximately 50 tonnes per week is imported. The airfreight issue at Kowanyama is more complex than just the length of the airstrip. Aircraft en route to other destinations in the Gulf land in Kowanyama laden with freight and fuel. Due to high air temperatures at the airport, it is not often possible to take off without lightening the load. This often means passengers are forced to miss the flight in order for the plane to be able to continue its freight run across the Gulf.

Kowanyama Aboriginal Community Council has been exploring options to improve freight services to the town. One option is to extend the airport. An application for funding is currently with the Government.

Air Passenger Travel

There is only one commercial airline operating in the Gulf region. Transtate Airline provides regular commercial services to Cairns and Mt Isa from Gulf communities. However, these can cost up to three times as much as fares available over similar distances in other parts of the State.

Burketown, Normanton, Karumba, Doomadgee, Kowanyama and Mornington Island airports have regular air passenger flights. The focus of the existing services appears to be on providing links to Cairns and Mt Isa. However, key links between centres such as Kowanyama and Normanton are not provided. This necessitates a side trip to Cairns to travel between the two centres.
The Kowanyama to Normanton direct air link should be given a high priority due to the fact that alternative modes of transport between these centres is extremely limited. The condition of the Kowanyama to Normanton Road makes it impassable during the wet season and for a considerable time afterwards each year. There are no bus services between the two centres and this is not likely to occur until the road conditions are considerably improved. The upgrading of the road is considered to be a longer-term option given the length and condition of the road. Other more strategic road transport linkages such as the Savannah Way are more likely to receive a higher priority status. Therefore air travel will be the key to linking these two communities of interest well into the future.

Transtate has indicated that the Gulf services are well patronised and it is considered that business traffic will increase with increased economic activity. There is expected to be an increase in economic activity due to the Pasminco Century Zinc project and as a result of increased tourism. On this basis Queensland Transport advises that regulation or subsidisation of the Gulf region could therefore hinder market forces and may conflict with the goals of the National Competition Policy especially given the current availability of commercial services.

The Gulf communities can be seen as being ‘captive’ air transport clients due to their isolation and inability to use other forms of transport in the wet season. With only one scheduled airline, the only feasible air passenger alternative is for air charters. There is considerable reliance on air travel for local travel, patient transfers and for Government personnel required to reach the Gulf communities.
13.2.2 Strategy

**Desired Strategic Outcomes**

- Appropriate access to air services and availability of suitable infrastructure.
- RFDS access to all communities not serviced by local medical facilities.
- Affordable airfreight access to all communities isolated during the wet season.
- Improved affordability of passenger air travel.
- Improved commercial airline services between centres within the region.

- Prepare an aviation service and infrastructure strategy for the Gulf region to ensure that the long-term needs of the community are addressed.
- Identify any strategically appropriate rural airstrips to be upgraded to RFDS standard. (With a priority to the upgrading of the Gregory, Old Doomadgee and Raft Point airstrips.)
- Improve air freight access to all of the community.
- Improve affordability and community access to commercial airline services:
  - investigating other key community air transport linkages; and
  - improving transport links between the Gulf centres to facilitate access to the centres which are presently serviced by commercial airlines.

13.2.3 Priority Actions

- Undertake a study to develop a long-term plan for aviation services and infrastructure in the Gulf region.
- Facilitate the current scheduled improvements to the Gregory airport to improve RFDS access.
- Investigate the need for improved RFDS access to Raft Point and Old Doomadgee.
- Lobby for a review of subsidy arrangements for commercial airlines in the Gulf region;
- Lobby for an extension of existing air passenger services within the region with a priority to provide a link between Kowanyama and Normanton and Kowanyama and Mornington Island;
- **Kowanyama Airport** - extend the airstrip to overcome freight plane take off difficulties.
- **Karumba Airport** - relocate or upgrade and extend the existing airport
- **Burketown Airport** - Undertake urgent erosion mitigation works at the Albert River end of runway.
- **Mornington Island Airport** - Extend the runway to allow for large airfreight aircraft.
- **Croydon** - seal airstrip (funding has been obtained from Queensland Transport).
13.3 SEA TRANSPORT

13.3.1 Issues

The Port of Karumba is the only major port in the study area, with a primary role of providing freight services to Mornington Island and Weipa. (The Transport Map refers.) The Port also operates as a commercial enterprise in its own right, accommodating a fishing fleet, live cattle export facilities, pilotage facilities and the Pasminco Century Zinc Mine slurry facilities. There are also a number of smaller landings throughout the Gulf, none of which have the commercial potential of the Port of Karumba.

The Ports Corporation of Queensland administers the Port of Karumba, including approximately 50 hectares of land and a barge ramp at the Port. All other on-shore facilities are privately owned and include wharves for handling general cargo, livestock, seafood and petroleum. Although the Ports Corporation is continually reviewing the need for common user facilities, it advises the development of such facilities cannot yet be commercially justified.

Land based fishing and access to the river at the Port are limited to the boat ramp. Most people are forced to acquire a boat in order to enjoy access to fishing in the river. It is an objective of the Fisheries Act to ensure access to fisheries resources is fair. In this regard, the provision of a public wharf or jetty at the port of Karumba could achieve this objective.

The existing port plan is currently under review. As part of the Pasminco Century Zinc Mine development, the entrance to the port is being deepened to allow larger ships (up to 8000 tonne) to enter the port. The greatest restriction at Karumba is the shallow channel depth. Despite an extensive dredging program that has been recently completed, the size of the ships capable of utilising the Port facilities at Karumba is not expected to increase significantly.

Therefore, unless the Ports Corporation is required under some community service obligation, it is unlikely to provide a public wharf at the Port. Public and tourist access to the river along the Port is currently limited and there is need for improved access for fishing and recreational purposes.

However, it is expected to facilitate live cattle exports which began in 1994 and should show significant growth. In 1997/98 35.8 kt of general cargo and 37.5 kt of livestock were shipped through the port despite the impacts of the Asian currency crisis. However, the existing on-shore cattle loading facilities are inadequate to handle larger ships, which require improved cattle loading and facilities to handle up to 2500 head of cattle per ship.

The Economic and Community Development Strategies identify Karumba as being a potential economic development and industrial growth centre in the Gulf region. This is primarily due to the increasing role of Port of Karumba as a trade and service facility. There is a need to allocate and protect sufficient land areas for the future growth of the Port and to accommodate associated industrial and commercial development.

The review of the Planning Scheme for Carpentaria Shire should incorporate the identification of suitable land adjacent to the Port to accommodate related business and industry.

There is demand for passenger and vehicle transport by barge between the Port of Karumba and Mornington Island. However, the primary purpose of the current barge service is primarily for freight.

There is also potential for barge services between Mornington Island and its many coastal outstations, including the community at Raft Point on Bentinck Island. In the longer term, barges could also service outstations along the coast at Old Doomadgee.
13.3.2 Strategy

Desired Strategic Outcomes

- Expanded and improved on-shore facilities at the Port of Karumba.
- Adequate land supplies to accommodate Port related business and industry.
- Improved barge passenger transport facilities.

The current review of the Port of Karumba Plan should include consideration of improved onshore facilities in terms of developing common user facilities including development of extension of cattle holding and loading facilities.

The provision of adequate supplies of serviced land at Karumba for port and waterfront related industries and business activities in the review of the Carpentaria Shire Planning Scheme.

Initiate a review of barge transport services in the Gulf in consultation with the service providers and the relevant Government and include investigation of options to improve community access to passenger barge services.

13.3.3 Priority Actions

- Support the review of the Port of Karumba Plan by the Ports Corporation of Queensland and for the consideration of increased common user and onshore cattle facilities.

- Support the review of the Planning Scheme for the Shire of Carpentaria and for its identification of services land to accommodate port related development.

- Ensure works commence in relation to the need for a review of passenger barge travel services within the next 5 years.
13.4 RAIL

13.4.1 Issues

There are two train services in the Gulf region that cater primarily for the tourist market, the Gulflander and the Savannahlander. The Transport Map refers. Chapter 8, the Economic Development Strategy expands on the tourism opportunities associated with the Gulf Railways.

The rail lines provide local employment for a number of residents living in several of the towns within the region. The town of Mt Surprise is dependent on the survival of the Savannahlander service as it is the biggest employer in the town with 10 full time employees working on the track and train. This figure is likely to change now the service has commenced operation (2 September 1998) between Cairns and Forsayth, as Mt Surprise will continue to be a focal point for this service.

The Savannahlander rail motor does not have the capability to carry vehicles, requiring returns trips, rather than facilitating through-travel. Options to expand the service so the train caters for vehicles need to be explored. This will allow patrons the flexibility to continue on through the region rather than returning to Cairns.

The Gulflander takes passengers and vehicles from Normanton to Croydon on a weekly basis. It provides a service most of the year, wet season conditions permitting, and has operated continuously since 1888. The car service operated to capacity last year, showing its potential to be incorporated into a formalised tourist transport network. Croydon Shire Council is currently restoring its historical steam train, as a tourist attraction. In the short term it will run from Croydon to Golden Gate near Croydon. In the longer term, this train may enhance the Gulflander service to Normanton.

There are currently no transport services that link the two rail lines. The extension of the line between Forsayth and Croydon to provide a continuous route to Normanton would involve approximately 200km of new construction and would cater mainly for tourists. The limited tourist numbers likely to use the route would not justify the high cost of constructing the connection from Forsayth to Croydon.

The main rail line from Townsville to Mt Isa traverses south of the Gulf Savannah region. This line is a major freight route for the mining and cattle industries as well as providing other freight and QLink services. The Inlander passenger train links Townsville and Mt Isa twice a week in both directions, providing a tourist and regional public transport service. The Transport Map refers.

The Gulf region would benefit economically from improved road linkages to the major freight distribution centres along the Townsville to Mt Isa route, especially Richmond, Julia Creek, Cloncurry, and Mt Isa. Greater interchange between road and rail, utilising rail as an efficient transport mode connecting the region to the major port of Townsville would improve the, social and economic performance of the region.

If successful, the Australian Inland Railway Express (AIRE) proposal will also provide high-speed linkages to Darwin and the southern states through a connection at Mt Isa. However, this is likely to be a longer-term option.
13.4.2 Strategy

**Desired Strategic Outcomes**

- Incorporation of the Gulf railways and links to the Mt Isa-to-Townsville railway into the integrated transport network and into a Gulf Regional Tourist Strategy.

- Improve transport linkages and schedules between the Gulf railways and with the Mt Isa-to-Townsville railway.

- Investigate the feasibility of the Savannahlander carrying vehicles, and the Croydon historical steam train proposal.

13.4.3 Priority Actions

- Ensure the following work commences in relation to the strategies within the next 5 years.
  - Improve transport linkages with and between rail services.
  - Options for the Savannahlander to carry vehicles.
13.5 INTEGRATED TRANSPORT PLANNING

13.5.1 Issues

To date transport agencies have not actively facilitated the integrations of transport modes, services and facilities to counter the impacts of isolation during the wet season. In recognition of the need to co-ordinate regional transport and land use planning mechanisms, Queensland Transport has developed Stages One and Two of a three-stage process to implement the Gulf Savannah Integrated Regional Transport Plan (IRTP). The Gulf region forms part of the total area addressed in the IRTP.

Despite the integration of transport modes which has occurred to date, on the whole various improvements and upgrading to road, rail, air and sea transport systems have, in past, occurred without comprehensive planning for key linkages between these systems. In a region where resources, existing transport infrastructure and the range of transport modes are seriously limited it is in the interests of efficiency to integrate and to expand existing transport modes.

However, maximising efficiency of the transport network does not necessarily provide equitable access to all users. Transport infrastructure resource allocation needs to be made on the basis of social justice principles, equity, access, participation and equality, as well as cost efficiency.

The minimum expected qualities of the transport system should include efficiency, safety, reliability and accessibility. In addition, current and future transport planning should:

• provide emergency access by the most appropriate transport mode;
• integrate the existing transport components;
• improve key linkages between modes;
• identify and develop key interchange facilities; and where relevant
• co-ordinate services of the various transport modes.

Figure 13.5.1 identifies the areas where the four transport systems are presently linked and the types of transport requirements that contribute to these linkages.

Figure 13.5.1 identifies the following five key transport system linkages:
• **Road – Air:** This linkage is utilised primarily to facilitate the transport of freight (particularly during the wet season), for passenger transfers and to provide access to RFDS and emergency services. Each Gulf community should either have all weather access to road freight services or all weather access to an airport capable of importing freight during road closures.

• **Road – Sea:** This linkage is utilised for the transport of freight and passengers to offshore destinations, for exports from the region and for recreational fishing and tourism. The Port of Karumba is the key sea freight and export node for the region. The more efficient this linkage becomes the less reliance will be placed on air transport for freight purposes, particularly for communities at Mornington Island and Weipa (outside the region).

• **Road – Rail:** This linkage is limited to the Gulflander railway that carries both vehicles and passengers. Improved linkages are required between the existing rail systems in the Gulf region as well as connecting the Gulf region with the Townsville-Mt Isa railway. This will increase tourist and passenger travel options. It will also facilitate freight and public transport to Townsville and other east coast destinations. Links could be enhanced by a local tourist bus service linking to coordinated time tables and potentially incorporating overnight stay or local tours.

• **Sea – Air:** This relates primarily to emergency services throughout the Gulf of Carpentaria waters, Karumba being the central location for air-sea rescue.

• **Sea – Rail:** This relates primarily to the Mt Isa to Townsville railway, linking the Gulf region to the Port of Townsville, via the Gulf road network. The Gulf road network also provides access to the rail systems at Mt Isa, Cloncurry, Julia Creek and Richmond.
13.5.2 Strategy

Desired Strategic Outcomes

- Increased efficiency, reliability and connectivity of the transport network in a manner that recognises the various elements of the network, their interrelationships and the most cost effective methods of upgrading the system.
- An integrated transport system providing an appropriate level of access to all transport users across the region and reasonable access to all sections of the community.
- Transport planning decisions incorporating the full range of financial, environmental and social costs and benefits in the assessment of transport options.

- Facilitate implementation of the actions in the *Gulf Savannah Integrated Regional Transport Plan (IRTP)*.
  - Ensure consideration of the following transport planning matters in the IRTP:  
    - the need to provide safe, efficient, accessible, affordable and reliable integrated transport system in the Gulf region;
    - the interrelationships between the road, rail, air and sea transport systems in terms of freight, passenger, RFDS and emergency services access and tourism demands;
    - the need to provide appropriate transport linkages relevant to the various transport users needs;
    - the need to develop regional interchange facilities; and
    - the need to coordinate the services, timetables and schedules of the Gulf transport modes.

13.5.3 Priority Actions

- Ensure the following work commences in relation to the strategies within the next 5 years:  
  - implement actions in the Gulf Savannah Integrated Regional Transport Plan;
  - identification of transport systems in Planning Schemes.

- Support Queensland Transport’s proposed workshops throughout the region to ensure integration of transport planning.

- Establish a forum for the coordination of transport planning across all modes.

- Ensure Local Government Planning Schemes identify and protect transport systems and, where relevant, make provision for interchange facilities.
14 IMPLEMENTATION AND COORDINATION

14.1 INTRODUCTION

The Gulf Regional Development Plan is intended to establish a framework for the proper development and management of the Gulf region and to guide future decision-making. The value of the GRDP will be largely determined by how successfully its strategies and recommendations are supported and implemented by all levels of Government, regional organisations and the community. The GRDP is not a statutory document, although its development on a regional basis and its endorsement by Government gives it considerable weight.

Successful implementation of the GRDP will be dependant upon on-going cooperation between the different interests and communities in the region. The common goal is to improve the circumstances of the region, to plan for its future and to better manage its economic, social, cultural and environmental values so as to meet the aspirations of its peoples.

It is essential that there be a coordinated approach to implementation of the GRDP. In addition, the best use must be made of available resources and a concerted effort made at the regional level to obtain additional resources to meet priority needs. This will require a considerable degree of cooperation and coordination between all levels of government as well as all sections of the community.

It is expected primary responsibility for implementation will rest with government agencies (Commonwealth, State and Local) as well as other responsible organisations, such as Aboriginal Community Councils, Native Title Representative Bodies, and ATSIC. The rights and responsibilities of individual Government agencies and other implementation organisations and authorities are to be respected and retained, including responsibility for the development and funding of programs within their sphere of interest.

To facilitate implementation of the GRDP it will be necessary to establish appropriate arrangements to guide, monitor and assist implementation. The implementation process should, wherever possible, make use of existing administrative structures and organisations to avoid establishing duplicate processes.

The overall coordination of implementation activities is an on-going requirement that forms part of the GRDP. Accordingly, the GRDP contains recommendations to deal with this issue.

In essence, the GRDP and its subsequent implementation can be considered in three stages (refer Figure 14.1):

**Stage 1 - Plan Making**

Preparation and endorsement of the GRDP document: This stage is complete with the production of the document and following consideration by Government.

**Stage 2 - Implementation and Further Work**

Stage 2 will be composed of three different elements. Firstly, arrangements need to be put in place to coordinate the implementation of GRDP outcomes that are to be carried out by Government agencies and relevant regional organisations.

Secondly, the GRDP recommends further studies and strategy development in specific areas. This work needs to be carried out as part of Stage 2 in parallel with other implementation activities.

Finally, negotiations need to begin on a Native Title Regional Framework Agreement, which develops principles and protocols for negotiations in respect of native title and regional development.

Key concepts of the Queensland Government partnerships approach - as used in the Cape York Partnerships initiative – are to be incorporated into Stage 2.
Stage 3 - GRDP Review

The implementation activities and recommended further work will result in additional information, data and recommendations. These outcomes need to be incorporated into the GRDP document as appropriate. Accordingly, it is recommended that the GRDP be revised at an appropriate point in time determined by the RPAC to ensure it remains current. The GRDP will then be revised and reissued.

It should be recognised that the process of monitoring and review is on going. Regular reviews and any necessary revisions should occur throughout the life of the GRDP, beyond the end of Stage 3.

14.2 IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW ARRANGEMENTS

To coordinate implementation, a strong, representative regional organisation is required which incorporates those bodies having a primary responsibility or interest in carrying out implementation activities as part of their core responsibilities.

This organisation will need to:
- play a central role in coordinating the activities of implementation bodies and agencies
- act as the “driving force” behind implementation of the GRDP
- monitor the progress in implementing GRDP strategies and recommendations
- undertake a periodical review of the GRDP to ensure it remains current and responsive to changing circumstances
- develop and provide a coordinated and united position on issues relevant to the Gulf region
- generate agreement on priorities and promote cooperation amongst Gulf communities and stakeholders
- obtain a recognised status and maintain credibility with government
- negotiate with Government to secure resourcing for GRDP implementation activities and to develop greater cooperation and coordination between government agencies
• keep the regional community informed of progress and activities related to the GRDP implementation
• secure resources to ensure organisation and operational support on an on-going basis.

The proposed organisational structure for Stage 2 is depicted in Figure 14.2.

14.2.1 Gulf RPAC (Stage 2)

It is considered appropriate that the Gulf Regional Planning Advisory Committee (RPAC) takes on the role of the peak regional body for stages 2 and 3 of the GRDP, with responsibility to:
• coordinate and drive implementation of the GRDP;
• oversee further studies and strategy development work as recommended in the GRDP;
• negotiate a Native Title Regional Framework Agreement between all relevant parties; and
• oversee a review of the GRDP as a result of the above-mentioned activities.

It must be recognised that sufficient resources will have to be obtained before Stages 2 and 3 of the GRDP can commence. At the time of preparation of this document, no resourcing or funding has been made available beyond Stage 1.

The Gulf RPAC already has representation from those sectors of the region that will be instrumental in implementing GRDP recommendations:
• Local Government (Croydon, Etheridge, Carpentaria, Mornington and Burke Shire Councils)
• Aboriginal Community Councils (Doomadgee and Kowanyama)
• State Government Agencies
• ATSIC
• Commonwealth Government
• Aboriginal Land Councils (Carpentaria Land Council, Cape York Land Council, and North Queensland Land Council)
• Gulf Savannah Tourism Organisation.

(Note: the jurisdictional boundaries of native title representative bodies within the Gulf region are under review - this may alter representation on the Stage 2 RPAC.)

It is proposed for Stage 2 of the GRDP process that the existing membership of the Gulf RPAC (refer Table 1.4) be extended to include representation from the Aboriginal Coordinating Council (ACC) and, if necessary, other representative parties as agreed by RPAC. The ACC (formed under the Community Services (Aborigines) Act 1984) is the peak representative body for Queensland’s Aboriginal Community Councils.

Given the variety of common issues and opportunities shared with the adjoining regions of the Northern Territory, it would be advantageous to all parties to ensure that the Northern Territory Government is consulted with throughout the implementation of the GRDP – this could extend to offering some form of membership on the Gulf RPAC.

The Gulf RPAC would meet on an as-needed basis, possibly once or twice a year, to deal with major or contentious issues raised through the implementation process. The RPAC would also consider significant or substantive amendments to the GRDP. The responsibility for coordinating the actual implementation of components of the GRDP will fall to the Implementation Coordination Group (see below).

The Queensland Department of Communication and Information, Local Government, Planning and Sport (DCILGPS) should continue its management and support role through to the implementation of the GRDP and its ongoing monitoring and review.

Resources will be required to ensure the effective functioning of the Gulf RPAC and the on-going provision of logistical support by DCILGPS.

Accordingly, a priority action will be to seek funding from Government to provide for the coordinated implementation of the GRDP in Stage 2 and for review of the GRDP in Stage 3.
14.2.2 Implementation Coordination Group (ICG)

The ICG will be comprised of senior officers from State and Local Government agencies, as well as representatives from non-government organisations (such as industry or environment bodies), which have responsibility for implementing major components of the GRDP. The ICG would meet on a regular basis throughout the year and act to resolve implementation issues and ensure progress is made in implementing each of the GRDP components. If necessary, the ICG can refer regional plan matters to the RPAC for resolution.

The ICG will establish working groups with corresponding lead and support agencies to implement specific strategies. The activities of these working groups may include the revision of the corresponding strategies to further refine key priorities, and reporting to the ICG regarding progress.

To successfully undertake its implementation and coordination role on behalf of the Gulf RPAC, the ICG will require logistical support and technical advice. There is also the need for:

- facilitation and liaison with implementation agencies on a day-to-day basis
- monitoring of implementation activities
- dissemination of information
- provision of assistance and advice
- management of reviews of the GRDP.

The fulfilment of these tasks will be critical if the full potential benefit of the GRDP is to be realised by the Gulf community and stakeholders. Resources will be required to ensure the effective functioning of the ICG and the on-going provision of logistical support.

Accordingly, a priority action will be to seek funding from Government to provide for the coordinated implementation of the GRDP by the Implementation Coordination Group in Stage 2.

14.2.3 Further Studies and Strategy Development

The GRDP (Stage 1) incorporates strategies designed to address a range of key issues confronting the region. A number of these strategies and their associated priority actions recommend further work and studies be undertaken in relation to broad regional strategy development.

The priority further studies and strategy development include:
- Environment;
- Tourism;
- Employment, Education and Training;
- Housing
- Communication.

The GRDP (Stage 1) also recommends studies and investigations to assist with the implementation of GRDP recommendations or to allow specific regional issues to be addressed.

The need for the above additional work is a direct result of the limitations imposed by the available funding to develop the GRDP in Stage 1.

A priority action should be to secure funding and resources to complete GRDP Stage 2, in respect of the priority strategy and study recommendations in GRDP Stage 1. All levels of Government should be approached to contribute funding to undertake this work under the direction of the Gulf RPAC.
Figure 14.2: Stage 2 Organisational Structure

Gulf Regional Planning Advisory Committee – Stage 2

**Role:**
Advisory - to coordinate activities and to liaise with Government

**Members:**
- Local Governments
  - Burke Shire
  - Carpentaria Shire
  - Croydon Shire
  - Etheridge Shire
  - Mornington Shire
- Aboriginal Community Councils
- Doomadgee
- Kowanyama
- Gulf Savannah Tourism Organisation
- Aboriginal Land Councils
- Carpentaria Land Council
- North Queensland Land Council
- Cape York Land Council
- ATSIC
- State Government
- Commonwealth Government
- Aboriginal Coordinating Council
- Other representative parties as agreed by the RPAC

Further Studies and Strategy Development Project Team

**Role:**
Specific Project Work - undertake further research and strategy development as necessary, subject to availability of funding.

**Members:**
As required by specific nature of project/s.

Implementation Coordination Group

**Role:**
Progress implementation of the GRDP – develop working groups to address GRDP strategies.

**Members:**
- Government Officers (Local, State, Commonwealth)
- Aboriginal Community Councils
- ATSIC
- Aboriginal Land Councils
- etc.

Native Title Regional Framework Agreement Group

**Role:**
Progress the development of a regional-level land use framework agreement based on the GRDP.

**Members:**
- Traditional Owners
- Local Governments
- Aboriginal Community Councils
- Industry Groups – eg. Pastoralists, Mining, Tourism, Fisheries, etc.

Other Strategy Working Groups

**Role:**
Progress implementation of the various GRDP strategies

**Members:**
As required

Members:
- Local Governments − Burke Shire − Carpentaria Shire − Croydon Shire − Etheridge Shire − Mornington Shire
- Aboriginal Community Councils − Doomadgee − Kowanyama
- Gulf Savannah Tourism Organisation
- Aboriginal Land Councils − Carpentaria Land Council − North Queensland Land Council − Cape York Land Council
- ATSIC
- State Government
- Commonwealth Government
- Aboriginal Coordinating Council
- Other representative parties as agreed by the RPAC

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~ Chapter 14 – Implementation and Coordination ~
References


