



# Regional Roads

## POSITION STATEMENT

### KEY MESSAGES

The sealing of the Newman to Marble Bar road, the Tom Price to Karratha Road and the study of the East-West Link represents major and strategic infrastructure commitments that prioritise the safety of the community and economic growth of the region.

Sealed roads are economic multipliers that return to the government the capital expenditure required through greater employment through construction jobs, lower maintenance costs compared to unsealed roads, higher road safety outcomes and greater economic growth due to enabling effect on business activity.

### COMMITMENTS SOUGHT

That a commitment be made to:

- ✓ Provide the necessary funds to support a full feasibility study into the economic value of the East-West link between Queensland and Western Australia through Alice Springs.
- ✓ Provide sufficient funding in the Northern Australia Roads Program to enable the completion of both the Marble Bar-Newman Road and Tom Price-Karratha Road by the end of the this term of government (45th Parliament of Australia)
- ✓ Provide sufficient funding in forward estimates to enable the completion of both the Marble Bar-Newman Road and Tom Price-Karratha Road by the end of the next term of government (40th Parliament of WA)



# Regional Roads

## POSITION STATEMENT

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Newman - Marble Bar - Port Hedland Road has been identified by Infrastructure Australia's Northern Australia Infrastructure Audit Report as having the second highest Vehicle Kilometres Travelled (VKT) per day of all Western Australian examples, with nearly 400,000 VKT per day, 55% of which by heavy vehicles. The Tom Price-Karratha Road is just below 100,000 VKT, with 33% through heavy vehicle traffic.

The WA Government through the Department of Transport has also identified the importance of both projects in its Regional Freight Transport Network Plan. Under 'Direction 9: Invest in the Road Network', the Department sets out the goal of completing the Tom Price-Karratha Road and a Marble Bar Road Upgrade between Newman and Rippon Hills Road turn off (Newman - Marble Bar).

These priority roads, as well as the link between Queensland and Western Australia through the Northern Territory are integrally linked to the Department of Regional Development and Lands 'Pilbara Cities Initiative' through its commitment to upgraded road infrastructure. The Pilbara

Development Commission's 'Investment Blueprint' also which specifically mentions all three road projects as high priorities, linking inland mining towns and National Parks to coastal ports and major airports. Export access to markets through infrastructure between principal locations and port or airport as well as tourist confidence is limited by the quality of road infrastructure. Increased flood resilience through sealing will ensure certainty for business travel costs and community safety irrespective of the weather season.

Additionally, the Department of Planning's 'Pilbara Planning and Infrastructure Framework' identifies the objective of 'integrated, efficient and safe roads' through 'continuing to upgrade existing highways to provide safe, all-weather road connections' and more specifically, to 'Provide an all-weather, sealed road from Marble Bar to Newman (through Nullagine)'. These projects have the full support of all local governments, all relevant State Government departments and all strategic planning documents; funding for construction is all that remains.

### IN BRIEF

- ✓ These three projects represent the core of the road plan for the Pilbara, and are supported by the State Government through the Departments of Regional Development, Lands and Transport and all major strategic planning documents.
- ✓ Only one of the three has received partial funding (Marble Bar Road has received approximately \$50m of \$330m required), with the rest remaining strategic yet unfunded infrastructure enablers with the potential to grow the economy and improve community safety.