

Works with Small Business

Good practice guidance for working with small businesses to minimise business disruption and support jobs when undertaking capital works projects



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Message from the Minister



Queensland's more than 445,000 small businesses form an essential part of the fabric of our economy and society. Small businesses employ around 42 per cent of all private sector workers in Queensland and contribute to their communities in countless other ways.

Our small businesses have been through an incredibly difficult year, due to the far-reaching economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. But Queensland is underpinned by solid economic fundamentals and its local communities and economies are already in the process of recovering. Our small businesses are vital to our recovery and to delivering opportunity to Queenslanders across the state.

The Queensland Government recognises the importance of infrastructure investment to our recovery. That is why we are supporting our economic recovery through Unite & Recover: Queensland's Economic Recovery Plan underpinned by more than \$8 billion in recovery initiatives, including investments in critical infrastructure projects to keep the economy moving and Queenslanders in jobs.

These recovery initiatives range from targeted support for industry and small business, to creating jobs through capital works projects which will deliver the infrastructure that Queenslanders need to live their lives and run their businesses. Our infrastructure investment will help boost our productivity and give Queensland's private sector, including small businesses, the confidence to grow and employ.

We have all been blown away by the resilience and adaptability shown by Queensland small businesses in the face of the pandemic. The Queensland Government has a role in supporting small businesses to stay resilient in times of change, and to create an environment where it is easy to do business.

That is why we have updated Works with Small Business – Good practice guidance for working with small businesses to minimise business disruption and support jobs when undertaking capital works projects for Queensland Government agencies and local councils.

This guidance material, first released in September 2019, recognises that we all gain when small business needs are taken into account during planning and construction of capital works projects. Works with Small Business builds on existing engagement and collaboration approaches to deliver practical advice for government agencies working with small businesses.

Initial implementation of this guidance saw positive results for small businesses at sites in North Brisbane, Binna Burra and Mareeba. Since that time, COVID-19 has turned the small business world upside down, so it is more important than ever to consider the impact of our actions on local businesses.

I am pleased to release this updated guidance. As Queensland rebuilds its economy, we want to encourage Queensland Government agencies as well as local councils to be more conscious of small businesses when planning and undertaking capital works projects, ensuring that capital works deliver the maximum benefits to small businesses and all Queenslanders in the long run.

By working together, we can make it easier to do business here in Queensland and support the recovery, growth and prosperity of our small businesses and economy.

The Honourable Di Farmer MP

Minister for Employment and Small Business
Minister for Training and Skills Development

Message from the Queensland Small Business Commissioner



As an advocate for Queensland small businesses and a member of the Queensland Small Business Advisory Council, I welcome this good practice guidance to support more small business friendly capital works projects.

This is a time of economic and business regeneration in Queensland and we need to do everything we can to make it easy to do business here.

Capital works are crucial for the growth of communities and the state, paving the way forward for future generations and providing Queenslanders with new and improved facilities. Often, through improved access, better facilities and more connected infrastructure, small businesses can be the biggest beneficiaries of the investments that governments make.

However, it is critical that all levels of government find ways to work with small business during construction to limit the impact of disruptions such as restricted access, construction noise and reduced visibility. Effective and appropriate

engagement between the government and small businesses during these periods of disruption can produce significant benefits, including:

- helping to foster greater awareness of small business and community needs and expectations
- increasing small business and community understanding of public works operations
- reinforcing the accountability of government agencies to the public
- generating community goodwill.

This guidance material is a great example of the challenges and needs of small businesses in Queensland being brought to the forefront of government policy and decision-making.

I acknowledge the value of inter-jurisdictional collaboration in the development of this work, including discussions with State and Territory Small Business Commissioners. States, territories and local governments are increasingly proactive in working with small businesses to minimise disruption and I commend these efforts. The initial six-month pilot of *Works with Small Business*, undertaken in collaboration with the Department of Transport and Main Roads, has shown it is delivering fantastic results for a range of small businesses, including a café impacted by construction of a bikeway, businesses impacted by a major road interchange upgrade, and crucial work to repair damaged roads providing access to an eco-tourism business that was largely destroyed by bushfire in September 2019.

I encourage small business owners to continue to work collaboratively with all levels of government to come up with effective and innovative ways to limit the impacts of disruption.

Maree Adshead
Queensland Small Business Commissioner

Overview

The good practice guidance outlined in this document has been developed to assist agencies and councils to proactively engage with small businesses when undertaking capital works projects. As every project is unique, this guidance is flexible, adaptable and designed to encourage creative thinking and innovative solutions and strategies.

Underpinning the guidance material is a recognition of the importance of a number of principles for engagement that are relevant for those delivering works and those who are impacted as they occur. These principles help to establish a shared understanding of how stakeholders can expect to be involved in the delivery of a project, along with the contribution that they can make.

The good practice guidance is grouped around four key areas:

1. Impact assessment
2. Engagement and communications strategy
3. Disruption mitigation plan
4. Evaluation

Conducting an **impact assessment** before the commencement of a project will assist agencies to better understand how a business works and assess potential impacts on both the overall area and individual businesses.

A robust small business **engagement strategy** will facilitate meaningful, clear and transparent communication between agencies and affected small businesses.

Having a **disruption mitigation plan** will help in identifying appropriate support measures to limit effects on small business (this plan should be informed by the impact assessment and engagement strategy).

The **impact assessment** and **engagement strategy** may be developed concurrently with information gathered to inform the development of the **disruption mitigation plan**.

Once the project is completed, undertaking an **evaluation** of the impact assessment, engagement strategy and disruption mitigation plan will assess the effectiveness of the approach taken and help agencies to adapt processes to ensure they continue to be effective.

It is important to note that the guidance provided does not reduce any legal liability that may otherwise occur, nor does it confer any entitlement to financial compensation for individual businesses.



Principles for engagement

Effective engagement and consultation between stakeholders are critical factors to the success of project development, decision-making and implementation.

When following the processes set out in this guidance material, engagement between all stakeholders should be underpinned by the following key principles:

Integrity

Stakeholders undertake and encourage actions that build trust and credibility throughout the consultation process.

Openness

Stakeholders encourage the disclosure of all information relevant to affected parties in a timely manner.

Inclusion

Impacted stakeholders have fair and equal access to information and public participation processes and the opportunity to influence decisions where possible.

Respect

Stakeholders engage with each other respectfully and consider different points of view and any mitigation options put forward.

Collaboration

A collaborative approach allows government agencies and small businesses to work together to achieve desirable outcomes.



Impact assessment

Purpose

To assess the impact that a capital works project may have on small businesses in the area and their suppliers, clients and customers including by gathering information on individual businesses' processes and needs.

How?

The impact of capital works projects will vary between individual small businesses. As such, it is important that agencies assess the potential impacts of projects both overall and at an individual business level.

Conducting an impact assessment will require information gathering both from the internal project team and from key small business stakeholders in the area. Identification of business 'pain points' is critical to help identify strategies in the disruption mitigation plan. This early thinking and working with small business will also inform the engagement strategy.

A number of factors will need to be considered to assess the impacts of the works on local small businesses and help to limit these. The impact assessment should consider the factors below.

Duration

The assessment should consider the length of time the project will run, any particularly intense periods of disruption in the schedule of works and if modifications can be made to boundaries or access to reduce business disruption during different stages of the project. The assessment should consider whether the works will disrupt trading at peak trading times or during holiday periods.

Visibility

The visibility assessment should consider whether the works being undertaken will limit the ability of customers to

see storefronts and if there could be any confusion for customers about whether businesses are trading or how to access those businesses. The assessment should consider:

- Will storefronts be clearly visible for customers and suppliers?
- Can road users see if the trading area is open and how to access that area?
- Does the project significantly intrude on the trading area?

Accessibility

The accessibility assessment should consider whether the works will impede physical access to businesses including:

- road access
- availability of parking at the businesses
- access via public transport
- access to fire exits
- any impediments to access for pedestrians via footpath
- access for people with a disability and/or mobility issues
- special events
- access for deliveries to and from the business
- traffic redistribution and traffic related impacts.

Risks

What are the potential risks associated with the project that could impact on small businesses? The assessment should consider the possibility of construction delays or changes to project staging that could impact on stakeholders. The assessment should also consider how risks of unforeseen or more significant disruptions (above what was anticipated) will be managed, including how risks are captured/dealt with through the engagement plan.

Utilities and services

The utilities and services assessment should consider if there will be any disruption to electricity, internet, waste management, telecommunications, water or gas services for local businesses. It will also need to determine if there are any other utility maintenance works that are scheduled during the project and whether any of the construction work poses any risk of disruption to essential services.

Economic

The economic assessment should consider the potential for broader economic and supply chain impacts on affected small businesses considering the nature of businesses involved, including:

- Could perishable items be lost due to utilities interruptions or impediments to deliveries?
- Will there be any limits or changes to trading hours for businesses?

- What will be the ‘pain points’ for each affected business?
- Will there be impacts beyond the immediate zone of the works including impacts to supply chains?
- Could the works be reasonably expected to ‘push’ potential customers away?
- What are the potential benefits to businesses once the works are completed?

Environment

The environmental assessment should consider how the affected area will be experienced by owners, employees and customers of businesses, including:

- dirt, dust and other pollutants generated by the works undertaken
- the potential for vibration impacts and noise pollution to affect local businesses
- loss of amenity during works.

Human Rights

In engaging with small business stakeholders, public entities including public service employees have a responsibility to respect, protect and promote the human rights of individuals. Public entities must act in a way that is compatible with human rights when taking action or making decisions, including when delivering services and interacting with the community. This requires consideration of any impact that an action may have on human rights, whether direct or indirect, provided that the impact is foreseeable. For example, actions or decisions may affect the human rights of individuals who work for or own a small business. For more information on compliance with the *Human Rights Act 2019* including the rights protected by the Act, please visit www.forgov.qld.gov.au/humanrights.





Restoration progress along Binna Burra Road, May 2020

Binna Burra Road Reconstruction

Following the devastating bushfires at the beginning of the 2019–2020 bushfire season across Australia, the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) and Binna Burra Lodge entered into a collaborative stakeholder arrangement for the reconstruction of Binna Burra Road.

The coordination of Binna Burra Lodge's access requirements through an active construction site was managed closely by TMR. This collaborative approach allowed the road reconstruction and Binna Burra Lodge's demolition and reconstruction of remaining assets to be undertaken concurrently.

Binna Burra Lodge has operated on the site since 1933 and is a popular eco-tourism venue in Queensland and is located within the World Heritage-listed Lamington National Park in the Gold Coast hinterland.

In September 2019, a bushfire destroyed most of the buildings at the cultural heritage-listed facility, including the historic wooden lodge and cabin buildings. In the wake of the bushfire, TMR commenced works to repair the severely damaged road.

Binna Burra Road was closed to the general public after the bushfire. Repair works involved installing slope stabilisation structures below the road, roadside safety barriers and rock-fall protection measures above the road.

TMR provided regular and ongoing daily access windows to Binna Burra Lodge and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services (QPWS) staff and two other private landowners within the Binna Burra area.

During ongoing wet weather in January and February 2020, access to the work site was restricted primarily to TMR's geotechnical team and reconstruction crews. However, access for crucial maintenance activities continued to be provided to Binna Burra Lodge and QPWS. When reconstruction works recommenced in late February, the daily access windows returned to assist Binna Burra Lodge in their recovery efforts. Binna Burra Road reopened in August 2020.

TMR was a member of the Binna Burra Lodge Recovery Taskforce established for six months by the Honourable Cameron Dick, the then Minister for State Development. The taskforce comprised multiple Queensland Government agencies and Binna Burra Lodge management to coordinate the recovery of the lodge. While the formal taskforce completed its term in February 2020, the good working relationships between TMR and Binna Burra Lodge have continued.

TMR further supported the local small business community impacted by the fires by providing temporary employment to three Binna Burra Lodge staff at its Nerang office.

Engagement strategy

Purpose

To set a framework for constructive engagement with stakeholders and establish clear and transparent communication between project management and affected small businesses.

How?

The communications plan should be developed as early as possible, ideally before finalisation of project planning, and should evolve. Information gathered will also inform the impact assessment and disruption mitigation plans.

Stakeholders

The process should begin with a comprehensive process to identify stakeholders impacted by the project, including businesses directly affected and their clients, customers and suppliers. Affected home-based (e.g. consultancies) or mobile businesses (e.g. coffee carts) should also be considered.

In developing the engagement strategy, information should be gathered to better understand the impacted stakeholders. The engagement strategy should:

- establish a preferred method of contact such as email, phone or face to face
- determine the peak trading times for the business
- consider the customer base for the business including regular customers, walk through customers and the use of appointments
- find out about the access needs for delivery of supplies and waste removal
- establish tailored communication strategies ensuring culturally appropriate and respectful communication for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities
- consider the scale of impact of the project on the stakeholder
- ensure long-term positive benefits of the project are understood by stakeholders
- include how privacy of stakeholders' personal and business data will be maintained.





In developing the communications strategy for the project, the appropriate level of engagement for different stakeholder groups should be determined. Consideration should be given to organising stakeholders into tiered groups with those most affected contacted regularly with all project updates and provided with a key contact for the project.

Communication principles

The communications strategy will set out how and when stakeholders will be engaged. In developing the strategy consideration should be given to:

- informing businesses of timeframes of upcoming work in advance so they can plan ahead
- setting out clearly the purpose, goals, strategy and constraints of the project
- providing regular and detailed construction updates to local businesses through project newsletters, emails and face-to-face liaison
- empowering small businesses to work with each other and government to develop solutions, such as pop ups and joint events to attract customers to the area
- creating a key messages document covering why the project is being undertaken, what will be happening and in what timeframe, to ensure consistency of communications
- engaging with Traditional Owners where relevant and ensuring communications include mechanisms to reach these groups
- collaborating with local business associations to gain insight on the area
- providing a feedback mechanism to allow for issues raised by stakeholders and establishing an issues register to track the progress and resolution of issues.

Disruption mitigation plan

Purpose

To identify options to limit negative impacts on businesses from capital works and work collaboratively with small businesses to create practical solutions to minimise disruption.

How?

The information gathered in developing the impact assessment and engagement strategy will inform the disruption mitigation plan. This will involve working flexibly and creatively to design solutions tailored to the project and the affected businesses. Some possible strategies are listed below.

Physical impacts and accessibility

There may be measures that can be taken to reduce physical and accessibility impacts during works including, where possible, options to:

- conduct disruptive work outside peak times
- use barriers to reduce the impact of noise and dust
- create alternative access routes to affected businesses
- coordinate disruption of services such as utilities so small businesses do not have to deal with multiple outages
- limit intrusion of works into parking spaces and consider alternative parking options.

Procurement

The plan should outline options to support affected small businesses by encouraging procurement from local suppliers throughout the project whether it be through using local businesses to cater events or distributing promotional material for the business amongst project staff.

It is important that any procurement activities align with the *Queensland Government Procurement Policy 2019*, which establishes the whole-of-government procurement

framework, and the *Queensland Small Business Procurement Commitment – Action Statement*, which supports the Queensland Government’s commitment to making it easier for small businesses to supply to the government and be a model payer by paying small businesses quickly, on time and in full.

Consideration should also be given to engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses, especially in the local area, to assist in meeting the Queensland Government’s commitment to reaching three per cent of procurement with these businesses. Procuring from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses also supports the Queensland Government’s commitment to increase the economic participation of disadvantaged groups through business growth and employment.

To find out more about the Queensland Government Procurement Policy 2019, visit forgov.qld.gov.au/procurement-policy

To find out more about the Queensland Indigenous (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Procurement Policy, including how to achieve the procurement target, visit datsip.qld.gov.au/publications-governance-resources/policy-governance/queensland-indigenous-procurement-policy

To find out more about the *Queensland Small Business Procurement Commitment Action Statement* visit desbt.qld.gov.au/small-business/strategic-documents/procurement-action-statement

Marketing

The disruption mitigation plan should, where possible, consider options for agencies to facilitate collaborative marketing and promotional opportunities to support affected local businesses including working with small businesses to develop options for:

- providing signage for businesses to show the public they are open for business
- special events to bring visitors to the area



- support and encouragement of pop-up businesses
- identifying social media and other online communication marketing opportunities
- utilising project infrastructure as billboard space for promoting local businesses.

Additional supports

Putting small businesses in touch with additional supports can assist in addressing challenges.

- The Queensland Government has a wide range of measures in place to support small businesses to recover from the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. For more details on Queensland Government support for small businesses visit **www.business.qld.gov.au**.
- The Mentoring for Growth (M4G) Program provides eligible businesses access to volunteer business experts who provide insights, options and suggestions relating to challenges and opportunities being experienced by business. To find out more about the M4G program visit **www.business.qld.gov.au/running-business/growing-business/business-mentoring/mentoring-growth**.
- The Small Business Commissioner and their Office has a dedicated specialist role to work with small businesses and advocate for them across the state.
- To find out more about the Queensland Small Business Commissioner visit **www.desbt.qld.gov.au/small-business/qsbc**.
- The Queensland Small Business Advisory Council (QSBAC) provides advice on small business issues to the Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development, and has been involved in the development of this good practice guidance material. To find out more about the Queensland Small Business Advisory Council visit **www.desbt.qld.gov.au/small-business/advisory-groups/council**.
- The Industry Capability Network of Queensland allows businesses to register their capabilities to assist them to access public and private supply opportunities. For further information on the Industry Capability Network of Queensland visit **www.icn.org.au/queensland**.
- The Queensland Government provides a range of workshops to help small business to access and tender for supply opportunities. The Tendering for Business workshops help businesses to develop and submit conforming and effective tenders and Capability Statement workshops help businesses to demonstrate their experience, areas of expertise, competencies and achievements through the development of this key communication tool. Tendering for Business is available online while COVID-19 isolation restrictions are in place.



Completed priority crossing on the corner of Albion Road and Mawarra Street, with wayfinding signage to the right of the business.

North Brisbane Bikeway – Stages 2 and 3 (construction phase)

The North Brisbane Bikeway is a critical cycle corridor for greater Brisbane, connecting the CBD through to Chermside. The project is being delivered in partnership with Brisbane City Council, and will encourage more cycling, more often, across all ages.

Successful and ongoing stakeholder relationship management with a small business was a key consideration in the North Brisbane Bikeway Stages 2 and 3, as a local café is closely located to the project site.

The Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) and the contractor met with the café owner before construction started in May 2019 to discuss the planned works and address the business owner's concerns regarding removal of on-street parking outside their premises, as well as potential dust and noise impacts.

The contractor offered to provide and install wayfinding signage for pedestrians and motorists, and to manage the two parking spaces directly outside of the café. Corflute signage was also installed letting road users know the parking spaces were for café patrons only.

The TMR project team continued to communicate with the café owner during construction, providing opportunities for them to discuss the scheduling of works as well as any potential impacts, and what could be done to mitigate them.

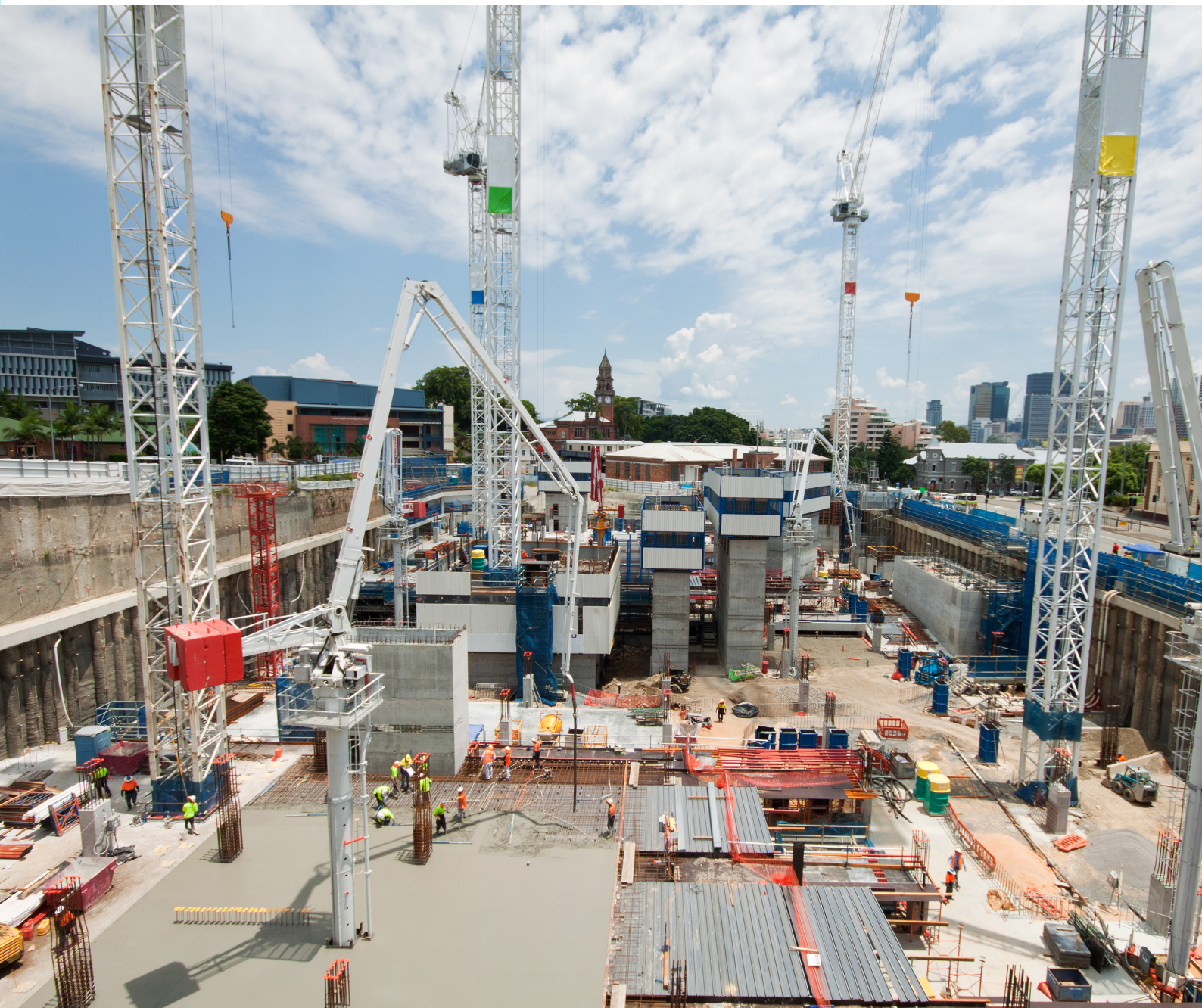
Construction of the North Brisbane Bikeway Stages 2 and 3 was completed in March 2020, and the café owner is looking forward to the community and economic benefits more people riding bikes and using local facilities will bring to their business!

To find out more about these workshops visit www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/events-and-workshops-page/news-and-events/events-and-workshops.html.

- The Regional Tourism Organisations (RTO) are membership-based bodies that play a role in marketing and development destinations, coordinating the efforts of the tourism industry, local government and the community to grow tourism.

There are 13 RTOs in Queensland which together represent more than 4,000 regional tourism businesses throughout the state. A list of RTOs can be found by visiting www.destq.com.au/regions.

- Additionally, most local government authorities provide support for small businesses. To find out more, visit your local government website to explore the assistance available.



Evaluation

Once the project is completed, an evaluation should be undertaken to assess the effectiveness of the impact assessment, engagement strategy and disruption mitigation plan. The evaluation could consider:

- Was the business and impact research undertaken sufficient?
- Were all relevant stakeholders consulted during the planning stage, and was that consultation sufficient?
- What was the feedback from stakeholders and how well were issues managed and resolved?
- Were there other factors that should have been considered in the early planning stages of the project?
- Were there any additional activities that could have been undertaken to minimise disruption?
- What did we learn and how can we share the experience?



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