

The existing Bruce Highway Upgrade Program (2013–14 to 2027–28), being delivered in partnership with the Australian Government:

Major Bruce Highway upgrades between Brisbane and Cairns delivered as at 31 December 2023 include:

- Six-laning between Caloundra Road and the Sunshine Motorway and between Caboolture Bribie Island Road and Steve Irwin Way
- Cooroy to Curra, Sections A, B and C
- Yeppen Flood Plain Upgrade (south of Rockhampton)
- Rockhampton Northern Access Upgrade
- Mackay Ring Road Stage 1
- Sandy Gully Bridge Upgrade, near Bowen
- Haughton River Floodplain Upgrade, midway between Ayr and Townsville
- Townsville Ring Road – Stages 4 and 5
- Cattle and Francis Creek Upgrade, south of Ingham
- Cairns Southern Access Corridor – Stages 1, 2, 3 and 4

Targeted road safety improvements delivered as at 31 December 2023:

- 239 km of new Wide Centre Line Treatment (WCLT)*
- 98 new overtaking lanes
- 195 protected right-hand turns and 32 signalised intersections
- 120 new bridges
- 35 new and 30 upgraded rest areas
- 479 km of roadside safety barriers
- 72 township entry treatments

* In addition, 667 km of WCLT and 430 km of Audio Tactile Line Marking (ATLM) have been delivered on the Bruce Highway under other programs.

Planning and delivery of other key major projects and targeted road safety improvements progressing as at 31 December 2023:

- Smart Motorways (Stage 2) – Pine River to Caloundra
- Six-laning between Caboolture – Bribie Island Road and Steve Irwin Way
- Cooroy to Curra, Section D: Woondum to Curra Tiaro Bypass
- Rockhampton Ring Road
- Gateway Motorway to Dohles Rocks Road
- Dohles Rocks Road to Anzac Avenue upgrade
- Anzac Avenue to Uhlmann Road upgrade
- Cairns Southern Access Corridor – Stages 5 (Foster Road upgrade intersection)
- Tiaro Bypass

Opportunities

Traversing 18 local government areas servicing 3.21 million people (2021), or 62 per cent of Queensland's population, the Bruce Highway connects people with each other, work, education, healthcare and tourism destinations. The highway is Queensland's major north-south intra-state road in the Brisbane–Cairns Corridor and is a critical link in the National Land Transport Network and National Key Freight Route. Directly and through connecting freight routes, the Bruce Highway is a major contributor to the Queensland and Australian economies, linking agriculture, resources, construction, tourism, manufacturing and services industries to ports and business centres.

Future growth projections

The population within the highway corridor is forecast to grow over the next two decades, reaching 4.13 million people by 2041 (Queensland Government Statistician's Office (QGSO) 2023). As the population along the corridor continues to grow, so too will demand for goods and services.

Emerging industries

The vitality of tomorrow's communities and businesses—particularly in regional Queensland—needs to be supported by an integrated transport system that can respond to changes in the economy, communities and environment. With regional growth in established markets expected to continue over the coming years and new industries emerging, such as renewable energy and hydrogen, more opportunities are emerging to drive performance of the transport network and better realise regional economic outcomes.

More people and businesses are embracing new vehicle technologies, such as electric and autonomous vehicles and adapting their travel behaviours, including working from home. Opportunities for integrated journey planning information and new services, such as renewable hydrogen refuelling for heavy vehicles and logistics and fast-charging sites for low or zero emission vehicles along the Bruce Highway present new ways of meeting the travel needs of Queenslanders now and into the future.

The Inland Freight Route

Viewing the Bruce Highway as part of the wider transport network provides opportunities to encourage moving heavy vehicles from the Bruce Highway to other north-south routes, such as the Inland Freight Route (from Mungindi on the New South Wales border to Charters Towers in north Queensland), refer to Figure 2. This route provides an alternative to the Bruce Highway, particularly during wet weather events, to ensure regional towns and communities continue receiving essential goods and services.

Enhanced driving experiences

There are opportunities to further enhance the driving experience for those travelling the Bruce Highway. For example, heavy vehicle drivers and other road users while managing their fatigue at rest areas, could enjoy targeted tourism experiences. This could include connecting people and place through information and stories about the local regional history or natural attractions, as well as educating on the benefits of taking frequent rest stops while driving.

Additionally, tapping into technology advancements to allow for better journey planning along the Bruce Highway would further enhance the driving experience. Early warning systems that advise of flooded roads or traffic incidents would give road users the opportunity to find alternative routes to improve safety and save time.

The Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games

Upgrades to the Bruce Highway in south-east Queensland are required to meet population growth and forecast traffic demand in the region. The Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games provides a unique opportunity to accelerate the delivery of key infrastructure across south-east Queensland.



Figure 2: The Inland Freight Route (from Mungindi on the New South Wales border to Charters Towers in north Queensland).