



The Coalition's Policy to Fix the Bruce Highway

July 2013

Key Points

The Coalition is determined to fix the Bruce Highway.

We will provide an investment of \$6.7 billion to partner with the Queensland Government in an \$8.5 billion package of works. Including the Gateway Motorway North upgrade, total capital expenditure will be nearly \$10 billion.

Our commitment will provide \$2.6 billion more toward the Bruce Highway upgrade than the Rudd-Gillard Government has committed.

We will put an end to the unproductive and politically-driven disputes between the various levels of government when it comes to funding the Bruce Highway.

The Coalition will enter an 80:20 funding agreement with the Queensland Government for the Bruce Highway upgrade. This is the Commonwealth's fair share and anything less than an 80:20 split makes fixing the Bruce Highway vulnerable to delay or a failure to fix it at all.

The Coalition is committed to the ten-year upgrade plan for the Bruce Highway as first proposed by the Queensland Government and we will get this upgrade finished.

It is vital that the Bruce Highway is made safe, reliable and capable of handling future traffic volumes.



Introduction

Infrastructure is key to Australia's competitiveness.

Better infrastructure underpins services, such as transport and logistics, water and energy. Inefficient infrastructure networks are one of the key reasons why Australia's productivity has declined and are also a key driver of the cost of living pressures affecting Australian households.

The Coalition understands the many benefits of providing an efficient and reliable integrated transport network across our nation.

We have a clear plan for delivering the infrastructure our cities and country needs.

Under the Coalition, vital transport projects will be underway across the country within twelve months of an election.

We have already committed:

- \$1.5 billion to get the East-West Link going in Melbourne;
- \$1.5 billion to ensure the Westconnex project gets underway in Sydney;
- \$1 billion to support the Gateway Motorway upgrade in Brisbane;
- \$500 million to support the continuing upgrade of the North-South Road Corridor in Adelaide;
- \$400 million to support the duplication of the Midland Highway in Tasmania; and
- \$5.6 billion to complete the duplication of the Pacific Highway from Newcastle to the Queensland border, including \$2.1 billion in new money.

In addition, the Coalition will:

- work with the NSW Government to get Sydney's F3 to M2 started by late 2014;
- complete the Perth Gateway project;
- get the Toowoomba Second Range Crossing underway; and
- build the National Broadband Network sooner and for tens of billions less than Labor's NBN.



The Coalition has a clear and definitive plan to build the nationally significant infrastructure our cities and country needs. Our infrastructure plan will mean that people spend less time in traffic and more time with family, that businesses can get their goods and services to market faster, and that our export industries can be more competitive.

The Importance of the Bruce Highway

The importance of the Bruce Highway cannot be overstated.

The Bruce Highway covers approximately 1,700 kilometres and is the main road between Cairns and Brisbane.

It is the major arterial connecting Queensland's seaboard communities and economic centres.

The Bruce Highway covers major regional centres, including: Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Rockhampton, Gladstone, Maryborough and the Sunshine Coast.

The economic importance of the Bruce Highway is widely recognised.

Infrastructure Australia notes that:

"The [Bruce] Highway plays a significant role in freight and passenger transport and its safe and efficient operation is important nationally."

Regional Development Australia notes that the Bruce Highway:

"...is critically important for the efficient, reliable and safe movement of people and freight throughout the state, and is the most significant single piece of transport infrastructure used by residents, visitors, business and industry all year round."

The North Queensland Roads Alliance estimates that the Bruce Highway contributes \$11.5 billion per annum to the Queensland economy and supports 60,000 jobs in North Queensland.

Queensland Premier Campbell Newman has committed \$1 billion extra over ten years for the Bruce Highway upgrade. The Premier has said:

"The LNP team committed to making safety and flood immunity the fundamental priorities of our ten year Crisis Action Plan for the Bruce Highway."



We have already committed \$1 billion of State funds for the Bruce Highway on the condition the Federal Government urgently brings forward expenditure to fix this link within ten years, so now they need to step up to the plate.”

The Federal Coalition shares Premier Newman’s concerns for the Bruce Highway and we accept the Commonwealth must play a significant role to get the upgrade finished.

Queensland, and our nation, cannot exploit our economic potential without a safe, reliable and efficient Bruce Highway.

The Need for Safety Improvements

The Bruce Highway accounts for approximately seven per cent of the national highway network, but it accounts for 17 per cent of national road fatalities.

Between 2008 and 2011, there were 170 deaths and 1,620 hospitalisations resulting from crashes on the Bruce Highway.

The Australian Automobile Association has called the Bruce Highway one of the most dangerous roads in Australia and the Bruce Highway upgrade is one of the Association’s top national priorities.

The Royal Automobile Club of Queensland estimates that 60 per cent of road deaths in Queensland occur on the Bruce Highway. The RACQ also estimates that, without further action to upgrade the Highway, an additional 350 people will die and 5,000 will be injured on the Highway over the next decade. The RACQ stated in 2012:

“...a general lack of capital investment on the Bruce Highway over many years means that there is a backlog of safety, flood immunity and capacity projects needed to raise the standard of the Highway.”

The most recent report under the Australian Roads Assessment Programme found that the Highway had the highest level of road trauma on the Queensland national network, accounting for 50 per cent of casualty crashes and 61 per cent of deaths between 2005 and 2009. The report states that:

“...the Bruce Highway is medium-high and high risk along much of its length...”

...This makes the Bruce Highway one of the more ‘risky’ roads identified in this report...



...Significant investment is required for infrastructure improvements along the Bruce Highway to address safety deficiencies and to cater for increasing traffic demand.”

The Australian Road Assessment Programme rated the stretch of Bruce Highway between Mackay and Sarina as the third most dangerous road in Australia. The section is only 25 kilometres, but it recorded 108 motorists injured and six killed between 2005 and 2009.

These are unacceptable statistics.

An upgrade of the Bruce Highway is urgently needed to make the road safer and to help prevent unnecessary deaths and injuries.

The Need to Address Flood Mitigation

An unacceptably large component of the Bruce Highway is prone to flooding and subsequent road closure.

The *Bruce Highway Ten Year Action Plan* produced by the Queensland Government estimates that, on average, every year nine locations along the Highway are closed for more than 48 hours and six locations are closed for more than five days a year due to flooding.

The Queensland Government found that:

“Significant flooding is an annual reality along the coastal plain traversed by the Bruce Highway between Brisbane and Cairns. Flooding of the highway occurs at a large number of creek and river crossings. In addition, highway flooding causes destruction of road pavements and structures, resulting in poor and unsafe driving conditions on damaged surfaces. Reconstruction then results in further delays to traffic.”

The Bruce Highway is routinely cut-off due to flooding at up to 33 sites, which economically paralyses North Queensland.

One area particularly prone to flooding is Sandy Gully. Closure of the Bruce Highway at Sandy Gully cuts off Abbot Point from the workforce living in Bowen. Periodic closure due to flooding also occurs at Goorganga Plains, Yellow Gin Creek, and Haughton River Bridge.

At Rockhampton alone, critical supplies to and from Central and North Queensland can be stalled for two to three weeks at a time, isolating over 700,000 Queenslanders.



Road closure due to flooding is as much a safety issue as an impediment to major industry and economic development.

A 2011 study by the Centre for Environmental Management at the Central Queensland University estimated that the cost of road disruptions in Rockhampton due to flooding is \$5.41 million per day. The study found that closures during the January 2011 floods cost the Rockhampton economy \$35 million and the wider Queensland economy \$45.7 million.

The tragedy and aftermath of Cyclone Yasi illustrated to all Australians the imperative for fixing the Bruce Highway. That such a vital highway is allowed to simply shut down due to weather and poses a danger to all who use it is a disgrace.

Making the Bruce Highway less flood-prone and creating more passing lanes are two of the biggest issues in North Queensland – economically and in terms of driver safety.

An upgrade of the Bruce Highway is urgently needed to ensure it is not subject to widespread closure and is both reliable and safer in all weather conditions.

Congestion and Capacity Constraints

The Bruce Highway is the major arterial road connecting Queensland's seaboard communities and economic centres between Cairns and Brisbane.

As a major road of economic and social importance, it is vital that the Bruce Highway has the capacity to deal with growing traffic volumes.

It is apparent that an increasing proportion of the Bruce Highway is subject to congestion and capacity constraints.

The Queensland Chamber of Commerce and Industry has estimated that:

“Traffic volumes on the Bruce Highway are expected to grow by more than three per cent per year to 2025, driven by population growth, a booming resource sector and strong agricultural and tourism sectors. This will further exacerbate delays when travelling.”

The Queensland Government recently found that:

“Traffic volumes along the whole length of the highway continue to increase rapidly as a result of the economic activity associated with the resources boom throughout the State. This traffic growth is manifest in both rural and urban areas...”



...severe congestion is occurring on roads within and approaching regional cities for example south of Rockhampton, Sarina to Mackay, the northern beach suburbs of Townsville and Gordonvale to Cairns."

Congestion on the Bruce Highway is a problem because it means more time spent in traffic and less time spent with families or being engaged in productive activities.

It means more costs for business and more frustration for motorists, families and businesses.

Capacity constraints on the Bruce Highway also make the road less safe.

The Coalition is committed to upgrading the Bruce Highway so that it has the capacity to safely deal with growing traffic volumes.

Ensuring the Bruce Highway has sufficient capacity to deal with current and future traffic volumes will mean that the road will have the ability to fully act as the important economic lifeblood it is to the Queensland and national economies.

The Plan

1. The Coalition's \$6.7 Billion Commitment to the Bruce Highway

The Coalition will provide \$6.7 billion to ensure there are sufficient resources and momentum to get vital safety, flood mitigation and congestion-busting work well underway on the Bruce Highway in coming years.

The Coalition will allocate \$2.1 billion to the Bruce Highway for a range of projects over the forward estimates (2013-14 to 2016-17). A list is detailed at Attachment A and includes priority projects such as the Yeppen South Floodplain upgrade, flood upgrades at Sandy Gully and Yellow Gin Creek, funding to start the Mackay Ring Road and Section C of the Cooroy to Curra project.

We believe it is vital that local communities, motorists, transport companies and private sector construction companies have certainty to get upgrade and safety-enhancement projects along the Bruce Highway underway.

The Coalition will ensure all of these projects are underway and completed on schedule.

All projects currently under construction along the Bruce Highway will be honoured by the Coalition and completed on schedule.



The Coalition will also provide \$4.6 billion for projects set for construction and completion over the next ten years. These projects are detailed at Attachment B and include the Mackay Northern access upgrade, the Cairns Southern Access Corridor (Stage 2), Caloundra Road to Sunshine Motorway (Stage 1), Haughton River Bridge and Pink Lily Lagoon construction and the Cattle and Frances Creeks upgrade.

2. Funding Certainty for the Bruce Highway

The Coalition will enter an 80:20 funding agreement for the Bruce Highway with the Queensland Government.

Under the Howard Government, roads of national significance and national priority were funded 80 per cent by the Commonwealth and 20 per cent by the States or Territories.

This approach provided an understood and certain approach to road funding that ended unproductive and politically-driven disputes between the various levels of government when it came to nationally significant road projects.

The Coalition will ensure an 80:20 funding agreement is adopted when it comes to nationally significant roads outside the capital cities, including the Bruce Highway. This is the Commonwealth's fair share and anything less than an 80:20 split makes fixing the Bruce Highway vulnerable to delay or a failure to fix it at all.

While all levels of government benefit from well-functioning roads, it is the Commonwealth that should provide the majority of funding for such roads. It is the Commonwealth that is responsible for ensuring interstate and freight road networks are efficient and it is the Commonwealth that reaps a large part of the gains from efficient road networks (such as through the higher taxation revenues that accrue through increased domestic trade and the greater investment and jobs growth this spurs).

The economic benefits of the Bruce Highway are clear.

The Coalition recognises the Bruce Highway as a nationally significant road and we will enter an 80:20 funding agreement with the Queensland Government so that the upgrade is not subject to funding disputes and is completed as quickly as possible.



The Choice

Labor promised \$4.1 billion to the Bruce Highway over the next ten years.

But nearly three-quarters of this promise is either re-announced money or money that will not be available until 2019 or two elections away.

Of the \$4.1 billion promised by Labor, \$1.7 billion is for previously announced projects and \$1.1 billion will not be available until after 2019.

It was Kevin Rudd who borrowed \$100 million every single day and turned the \$70 billion of government assets left by the Howard Government into a total gross debt set to breach the \$300 billion debt ceiling in coming years.

It is because of Kevin Rudd that we are now spending \$8 billion a year on interest payments on Labor's debt – money that could be far better spent on national infrastructure to boost our economy and productivity.

The Coalition has a better plan for our country.

We will stop government waste, fix the Budget, provide confident and stable government, and we will deliver the infrastructure our nation needs.

Under the Coalition, vital transport projects will be underway across the country within twelve months of an election.

The Coalition will fix the Bruce Highway.

Cost

The Coalition's Policy to Fix the Bruce Highway will involve an investment of \$6.7 billion over ten years, which is \$2.6 billion more than Labor's inadequate commitment to this essential piece of national infrastructure.



Attachment A – Bruce Highway projects (2013-14 to 2016-17)

	Total capital expenditure over forward estimates (\$m)	Federal contribution in forward estimates (\$m)
Cooroy to Curra project (Section A)	696	301
Black spots, rest areas and other targeted safety improvements	268	268
Yeppen Floodplain upgrade	246	186
Caloundra Rd to Sunshine Motorway - Stage 1 part construction	200	160
Mackay Ring Road - Stage 1 part construction	180	140
Townsville Ring Road - Stage 4	175.2	135.2
Upgrade of Caboolture to Caloundra	122.06	122.06
Cooroy to Curra (Section C) - part construction	140	112
Overtaking lanes	110	110
Duplication from Vantassel St to Flinders Hwy	113	85.5
Calliope Crossroads	53.03	53.03
Cooroy to Curra project	49.39	49.39
Sandy Gully Bridge upgrade	57	46



	Total capital expenditure over forward estimates (\$m)	Federal contribution in forward estimates (\$m)
Cabbage Tree Creek to Carman Rd and Back Creek Range section upgrade	62.75	42.75
Realign and raise Highway from Sandy Corner to Collinsons Lagoon	23.84	23.84
Upgrade the southern approach to Cairns	21.91	21.91
Pavement Widening (various)	50	40
Caloundra Road to Sunshine Motorway - Stage 2 planning and design	50	40
Improved flood immunity at Gairloch floodway	40	40
Houghton River and Pink Lily Lagoon upgrade - planning and design	50	40
Yellow Gin Creek upgrade	45	36
Mackay Ring Road - plan and preserve corridor	25	20
Upgrade Burdekin River Bridge	10.85	10.85
Upgrading of southern approaches to Gin Gin	10.64	10.64
Upgrade the southern approach to Mackay	3.48	3.48
Pine River to Caloundra interchange upgrades - planning	8	6.4
Burdekin Road Safety Audit projects	0.3	0.3
Total	2,811.45	2,104.35



Attachment B – Bruce Highway funded beyond the forward estimates over the next ten years

	Total (\$m)	Federal Contribution (\$m)
Cooroy to Curra (Section C) - final construction	808	646.4
Caloundra Road to Sunshine Motorway - Stage 2	743	594.4
Edmonton to Gordonvale duplication	481	384.8
Haughton River and Pink Lily Lagoon - construction	465	372
Bruce Highway safety package	400	320
Mackay Ring Road - Stage 1 final construction	360	288
Additional funding for black spots, rest areas & safety upgrades	175.2	175.2
Additional funding for overtaking lanes	165	165
Maroochydore Road interchange upgrade - Stage 1	187	149.6
Cattle and Frances Creeks upgrade	174	139.2
Additional targeted safety improvements	161	128.8
Caloundra Road to Sunshine Motorway - Stage 1 final construction	141	112.8
Cairns Southern Access Corridor - Stage 3	135	108
Rockhampton Northern access upgrade - Stage 1	121	96.8
Tiaro flood immunity upgrade	107	85.6
Managed Motorways - Gateway Motorway to Caboolture	105	84
Saltwater Creek upgrade	103	82.4
Pavement widening: Caboolture to St Lawrence	98	78.4
Mackay Northern access upgrade	80	64
Townsville Northern Access intersections upgrade	72	57.6



	Total (\$m)	Federal Contribution (\$m)
Rockhampton bypass - plan and preserve	65	52
Cairns Southern Access Corridor - Stage 2	58	46.4
Road operations improvement projects	56	44.8
Cooroy to Curra (Section D) - planning and design	50	40
Ingham to Cardwell range deviation - plan and preserve corridor	48	38.4
Burdekin Deviation - plan and preserve corridor	48	38.4
Pavement widening: St Lawrence to Bowen	40	32
Tinana Interchange	38	30.4
Pavement widening: South Home Hill to North Ingham	25	20
Pavement widening: Ingham to Cairns	40	32
Jumper Creek upgrade	23	18.4
Goorganga Plains upgrade - plan and preserve corridor	15	12
Dallachy Road flood immunity upgrade	11	8.8
Sarina Northern Access upgrade	11	8.8
Innisfail bypass - plan and preserve corridor	9	7.2
Mackay intersection upgrade - Stage 2	9	7.2
Childers bypass - plan and preserve	8	6.4
Knobels Road intersection upgrade	7	5.6
Ash and Pine Streets intersection upgrade	7	5.6
Babinda intersection upgrade	4	3.2
Total	5,653	4,590.60



Attachment C – The Coalition’s Policy to Fix the Bruce Highway

	Coalition	Labor
Total funding	\$6.7 billion	\$4.1 billion
Enough funding to get the job done	✓	✗
An end to disputes over road funding – an 80:20 funding agreement	✓	✗
A toll free Gateway Motorway for Brisbane	✓	✗
Jumper Creek upgrade funded	✓	✗
Full construction of Cooroy to Curra Section C	✓	✗
Dallachy Road flood immunity upgrade	✓	✗
Mackay intersection upgrade	✓	✗
Caloundra Road to Sunshine Motorway – Stage 2 – planning and design	✓	✗
Pine River to Caloundra interchange upgrades – planning	✓	✗
Caloundra Road to Sunshine Motorway – Stage 2 – construction	✓	✗
Edmonton to Gordonvale duplication	✓	✗
Maroochydore Road interchange upgrade – Stage 1	✓	✗
Cairns Southern Access Corridor – Stage 3	✓	✗
Saltwater Creek upgrade	✓	✗
Tiaro flood immunity upgrade	✓	✗



	Coalition	Labor
Pavement widening: Caboolture to St Lawrence	✓	✗
Townsville Northern Access intersections upgrade	✓	✗
Rockhampton bypass – plan and preserve	✓	✗
Ingham to Cardwell range deviation – plan and preserve corridor	✓	✗
Burdekin Deviation – plan and preserve corridor	✓	✗
Tinana interchange	✓	✗
Pavement widening: Ingham to Cairns	✓	✗
Goorganga Plains upgrade – plan and preserve corridor	✓	✗
Sarina Northern Access upgrade	✓	✗
Innisfail bypass – plan and preserve corridor	✓	✗
Mackay intersection upgrade – Stage 2	✓	✗
Childers bypass – plan and preserve	✓	✗
Knobels Road intersection upgrade	✓	✗
Ash and Pine Streets intersection upgrade	✓	✗
Babinda intersection upgrade	✓	✗



Hope.
Reward.
Opportunity.



THE NATIONALS *for Regional Australia*

For further details of the Coalition's Plan go to
www.realsolutions.org.au