

QUEENSLAND FREIGHT DELIVERY PLAN 2026



DELIVERING
FOR QUEENSLAND



Queensland
Government

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We thank the organisations and individuals who generously contributed their time through consultation sessions to inform this plan, as well as those who facilitated on-site photography that enabled the authentic Queensland imagery used throughout.

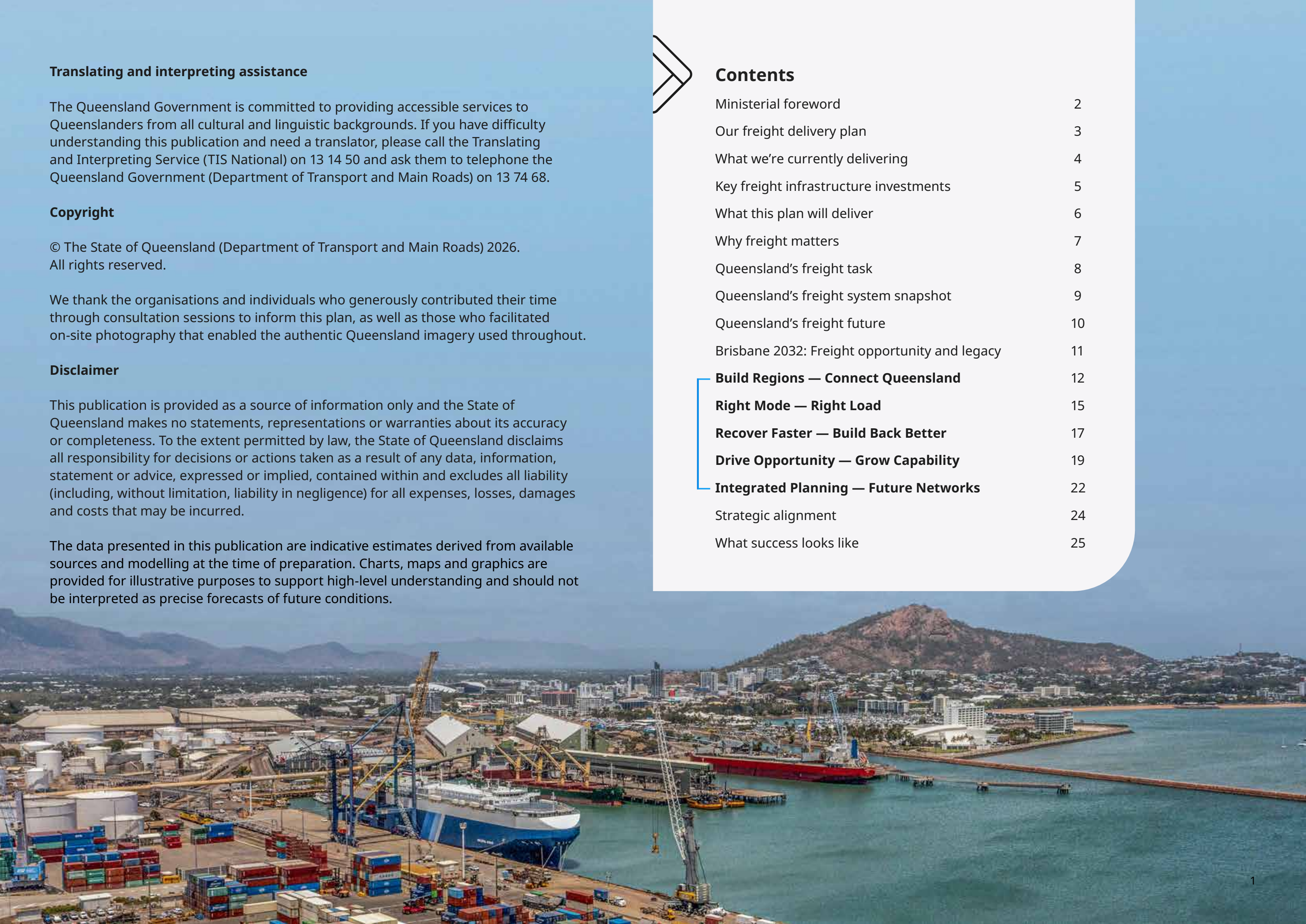
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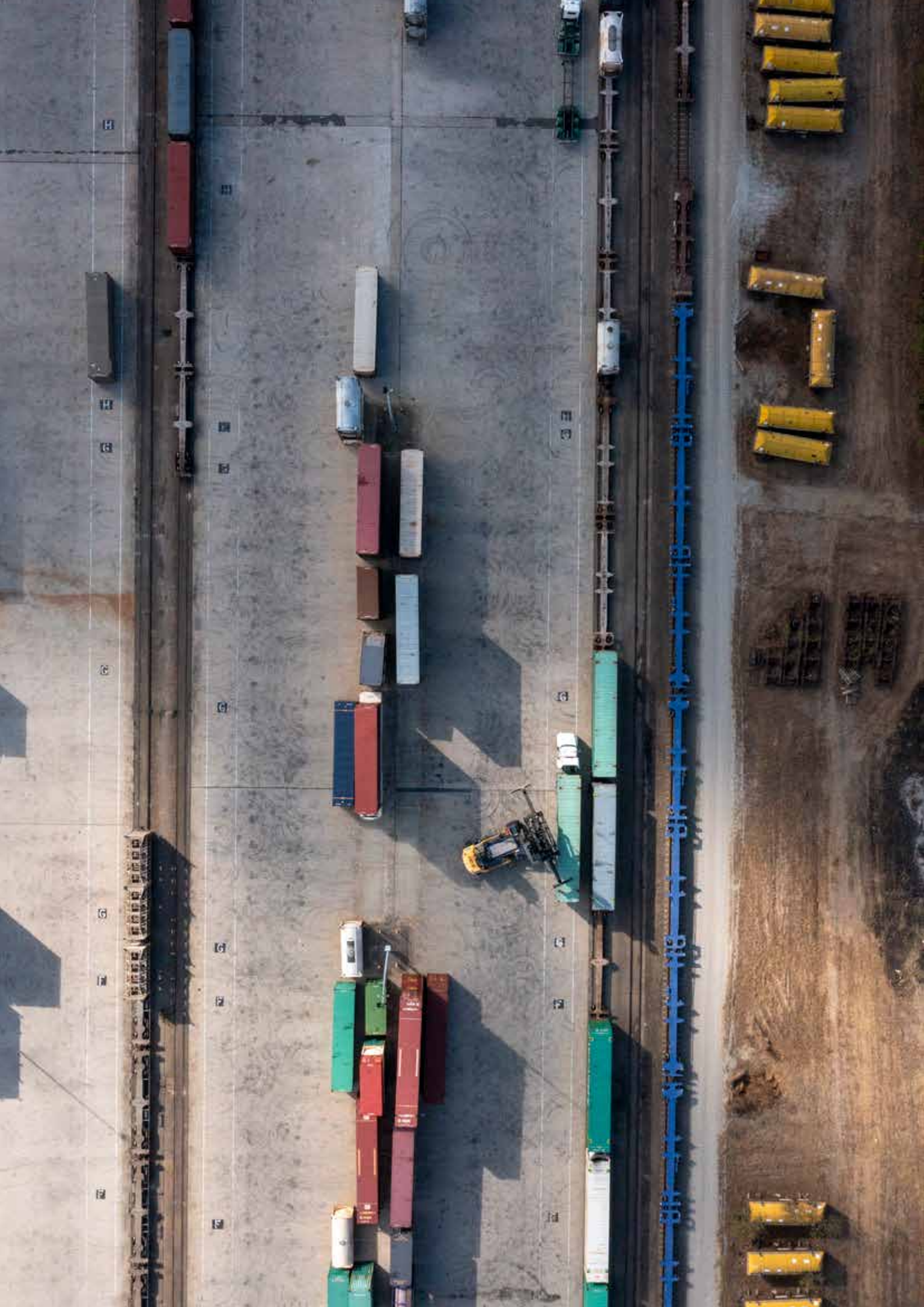
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Ministerial foreword

The Queensland Government is *Delivering for Queensland*.

Queensland's freight system is a fundamental element of that delivery, supporting regional development and improving productivity for our industries and businesses. The productive, reliable and safe movement of goods by our freight and logistics industry is vital to our lives and livelihoods, and it is therefore more important now than it ever is to set our freight network up for long term success.

With the freight task in Queensland projected to grow by 20 per cent by 2032, the Queensland Government is committed to delivering the infrastructure Queensland needs to support rising freight demand.

The Queensland Freight Delivery Plan 2026, developed in collaboration with the Queensland Ministerial Freight Council, industry stakeholders and local government, sets out a series of tangible actions that will improve the productivity, reliability and safety of our extensive freight system over the next five years.

Their insights have played a crucial role in shaping practical actions that respond to real world needs and capitalises on

opportunities right across the state to deliver growth and economic development outcomes across industries.

This new plan demonstrates our ongoing commitment to delivering for Queenslanders through:

- effectively prioritising our road and transport infrastructure investment to enable regional development and deliver improvements where they are most needed
- enabling more freight on rail by enhancing rail network performance, reliability and access
- advancing works and safety treatments along our key freight routes, including the Bruce Highway, Warrego Highway, and Flinders Highway, and other critical supply chains such as our Beef Road Corridors
- improving outcomes for our regional and remote communities, through more resilient supply chains.

At the end of the day, whether it's food, fuel or fibre, it gets to us because a truck or a train or a ship brought it to us. We want to back in these industries, with the right actions and incentives to unlock and deliver these services in a better way.

Government has an important role to play, and delivering on this plan aims to make sure Queensland has a more reliable freight system in the years ahead.

The Honourable Brent Mickelberg MP
Minister for Transport and Main Roads





Our Vision

A productive, reliable and safe freight system that drives economic growth and strengthens communities and their connections across Queensland.

Our freight delivery plan

The Queensland Freight Delivery Plan 2026 (QFDP) sets out practical, coordinated actions over the next five years to strengthen Queensland's freight system. Developed in collaboration with more than 500 stakeholders, the plan translates freight priorities into a series of objectives and deliverable actions that directly respond to feedback.

Outcomes



Productivity

Freight productivity enhanced by connecting regions, supply chains and trade gateways



Reliability

Reliability and resilience strengthened across an end-to-end freight system and supply chains



Safety

Safer, lower-impact freight operations for users of the network and communities

Focus areas



Build Regions,
Connect
Queensland



Right Mode,
Right Load



Recover Faster,
Build Back
Better



Drive
Opportunity,
Grow
Capability



Integrated
Planning,
Future
Networks

70 actions



Planning for
priority freight
corridors



Investing in
key freight
infrastructure



Improving
freight system
performance



Reforming
freight access



Strengthening
partnerships and
collaboration



What we're currently delivering

The Queensland Government is delivering a record **\$55.9 billion*** investment over the next four years in road and transport infrastructure across local, state and national networks.

\$13.3 billion* has been allocated to deliver new and upgraded infrastructure and incentives that benefit economically critical supply chains and support freight system productivity by improving the safety, connectivity and reliability of Queensland's transport networks.

Key projects and support for Queensland's freight system include:

\$9 billion	under the Bruce Highway Targeted Safety Program with targeted safety improvements being delivered north of Gympie.**	\$579.7 million	in current and future port investment across government owned corporation (GOC) ports.
\$1 billion	allocated for the Inland Freight Route between Charters Towers and Mungindi.**	\$96.9 million	for the rehabilitation and maintenance program to preserve the structural integrity of the Burdekin River Bridge.**
\$500 million	under the Queensland Beef Corridors, ensuring better connectivity and safety for freight and industry.**	\$110.3 million	over seven years to target freight disadvantage and reduce the cost of living in remote area communities including Torres Strait, Northern Peninsula and Gulf regions, as well as in South West and Central West Queensland.
\$100 million	committed to the Country Roads Connect program to improve resilience and safety in regional communities by sealing key regional access roads.	\$85 million	committed for the Bremer River Bridge strengthening project.**
\$1.98 billion	toward the Rockhampton Ring Road to enhance safety and efficiency for road users.**	\$42.6 million	to support the continued provision of cattle and regional freight contracts.
\$3.5 billion	toward the Coomera Connector Stage 1, Coomera to Nerang.**	\$41.1 million	on below-rail access charges subsidy for all users of the Mount Isa Line over four years, providing certainty for businesses to plan, invest and grow, comes alongside rail cost relief for emerging phosphate producers.
\$1 billion	toward Beerburrum to Nambour Rail Upgrade (Stage 1).**		

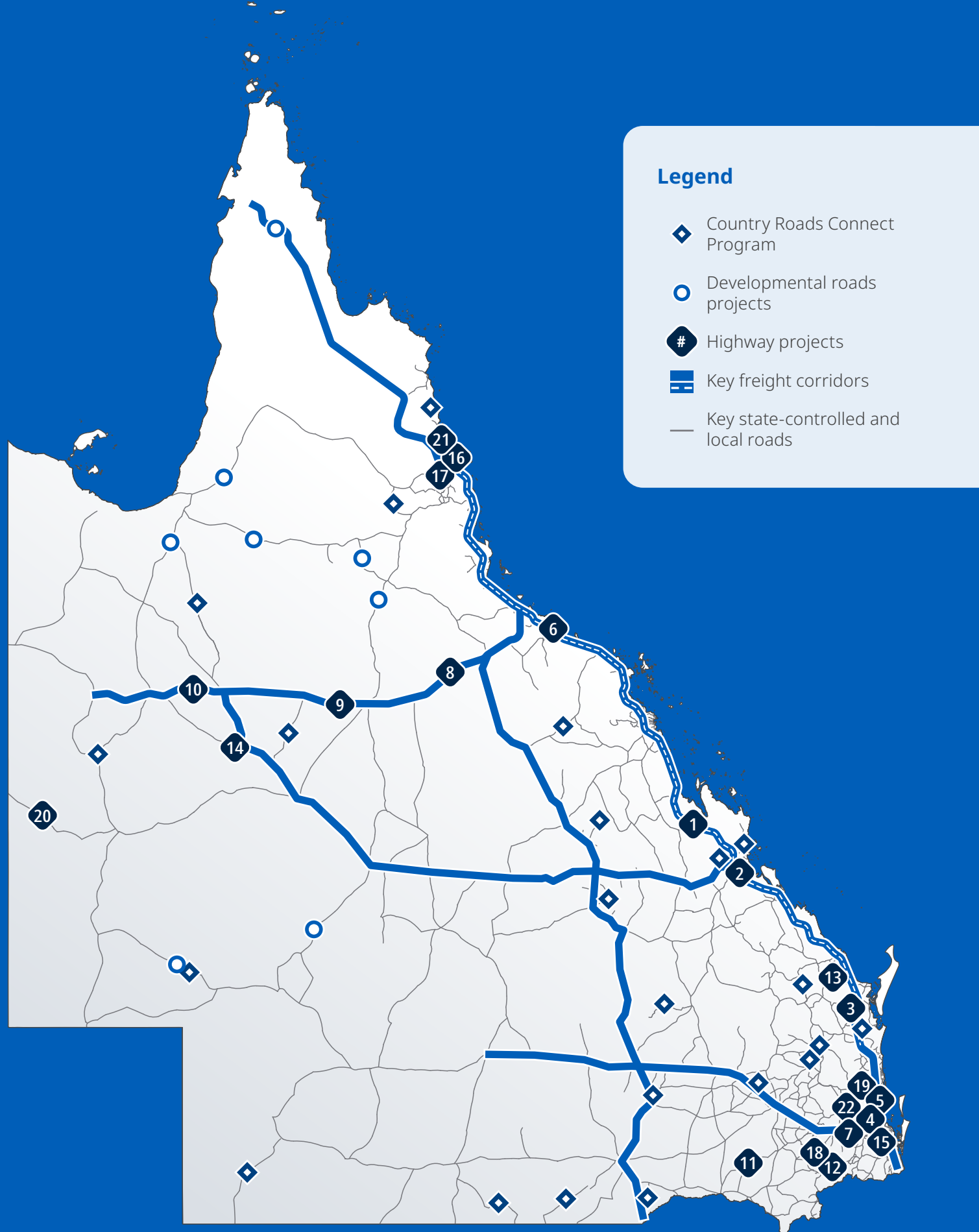
* Includes Australian Government funding. \$13.3 billion comprises \$12.57 billion from 143 projects within the Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program 2026–27 to 2029–30 and \$773.9 million in government expenditure, including GOC capital expenditure, rail and remote freight support.

** Jointly funded with the Australian Government.



Key freight infrastructure investments

Alongside major freight infrastructure investments, the Queensland Government is delivering targeted upgrades across key freight corridors to support the productive, reliable and safe movement of freight across Queensland.



Key highway upgrade projects

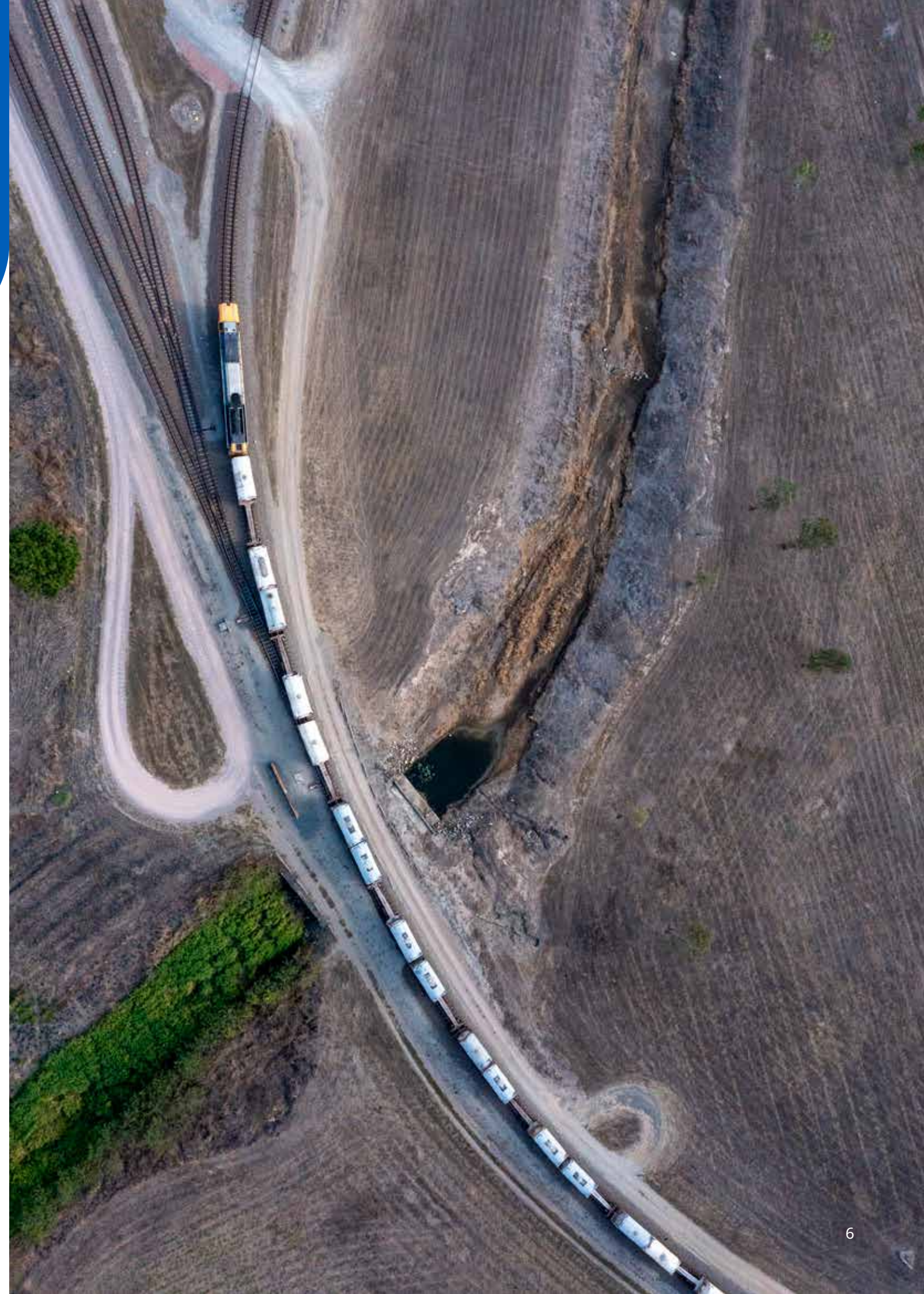
- 1 Bruce Highway Targeted Safety Program
- 2 Bruce Highway Upgrade Program
- 3 Warrego Highway – bridge strengthening and safety improvements
- 4 Flinders Highway – upgrades, resilience improvements and heavy vehicle rest area construction
- 5 Gore Highway – reconstruction, rehabilitation and safety improvements
- 6 Cunningham Highway – reconstruction and safety improvements
- 7 Isis Highway – safety improvements
- 8 Landsborough Highway – reconstruction works
- 9 Mount Lindesay Highway – planning activities, safety and capacity upgrade works
- 10 Kennedy Highway – reconstruction works and overtaking lanes
- 11 New England Highway – safety improvements
- 12 D'Aguilar Highway – safety improvements
- 13 Donohue Highway – progressive sealing works
- 14 Captain Cook Highway – reconstruction and betterment works
- 15 Brisbane Valley Highway – safety improvements and pavement strengthening
- 16
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For details on current and planned investment visit tmr.qld.gov.au/qtriponline.

What this plan will deliver

The QFDP will unlock new opportunities and address challenges across the freight system in Queensland with 70 actions to be delivered over the next five years—many of which are already underway. These actions are centred on the key themes of access, efficiency, productivity, resilience and regional development. Some headline actions in this plan include:

- ✓ Delivering a new **Rail Freight Container Incentive Scheme** providing a rebate to end customers for new container freight moved by rail.
- ✓ Prioritising the **delivery of upgrades on the Mount Isa Line** to unlock the growth of the North West Minerals Province.
- ✓ Delivering the **Bruce Highway Targeted Safety Program** and the **Bruce Highway Upgrade Program** to prioritise road safety treatments and capacity upgrades.
- ✓ **Reforming heavy vehicle access arrangements for greater productivity and efficiency**, including introduction of the National Automated Access System.
- ✓ Delivering a **new discounted diesel fuel access charge** for the Mount Isa Line to promote the movement of fuel on rail.
- ✓ Delivering **new open access intermodal developments on key freight corridors** to provide greater access to the rail network.
- ✓ Upgrading priority **rail and road freight corridors** and delivering improvements to **first and last mile connections** to ports.
- ✓ Delivering **new and upgraded rest areas, decoupling pads, and effluent disposal facilities** to support heavy vehicle operations on priority freight corridors.
- ✓ Delivering **upgraded sea freight infrastructure** in Northern Queensland to support improved sea freight operations.
- ✓ Publishing the **Queensland State of Freight Snapshot**, including indicators, measures of success and updates on implementing the actions of the plan.
- ✓ **Enhancing the Department of Transport and Main Roads' (TMR) consultative approach with industry, government and community** for the co-development of new ideas and solutions to improve freight system outcomes.



Why freight matters

Freight is the backbone of Queensland's economy, connecting producers to markets, communities to essential goods, and businesses to global trade opportunities. Queensland's freight system underpins economic prosperity by linking industries and communities through resilient supply chains.

Freight movement supports industrial performance, keeps communities supplied with everyday essentials, and enhances both state and international trade relationships.

The transportation of raw materials, goods, agricultural products, and equipment by the freight system generates employment, drives productivity, strengthens regional economies, and reinforces Queensland's role in national and global supply chains.

Queensland's freight system is built on the movement of diverse goods, each with its own geographic footprint, infrastructure and delivery needs. Our freight system is product-driven, regionally anchored, and network-reliant, reflecting the unique requirements of industries and communities across the state.

A productive, reliable and safe freight system is essential for ensuring Queensland's ability to respond to emergencies and maintain supply chain continuity during natural disasters, pandemics, or other disruptions. Freight plays a critical role in delivering essential goods, such as food, medical supplies, and emergency equipment, to communities in need, particularly in remote and regional areas. This capacity to adapt and respond underpins the state's disaster recovery efforts and strengthens community resilience.

Queensland is a trading powerhouse. Strengthening the freight system is critical to securing Queensland's position as a globally competitive economy, enabling regional industries, future-proofing our trade advantage and enabling sustainable growth and resilience across the state.



Queensland connects with over 200 countries, territories, and regions every year.



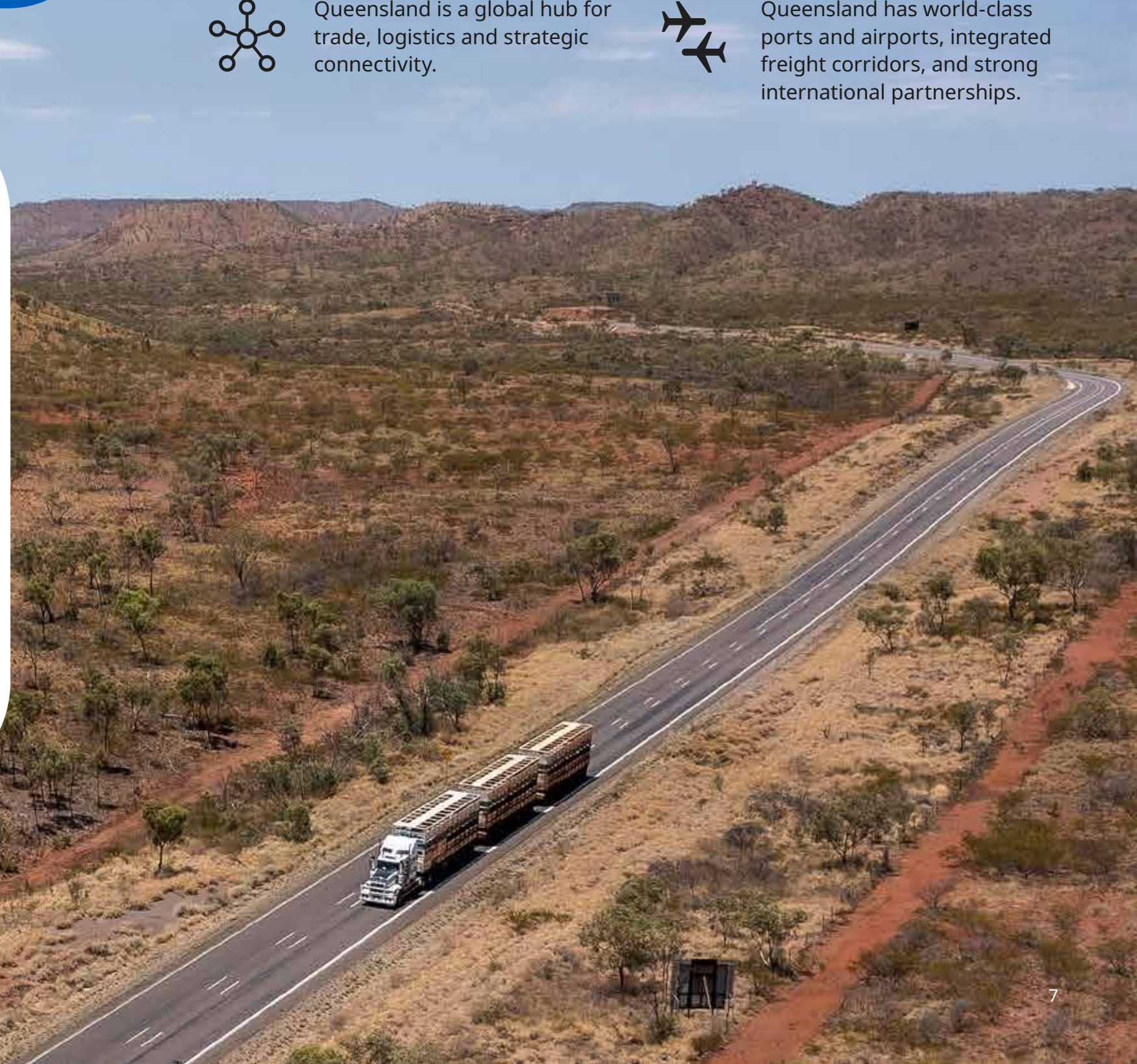
Queensland exports over \$105 billion in goods and imports \$75 billion in goods annually.



Queensland is a global hub for trade, logistics and strategic connectivity.



Queensland has world-class ports and airports, integrated freight corridors, and strong international partnerships.



Queensland's freight task

Queensland's freight system is built on regional diversity—moving agriculture and livestock from the bush, minerals from remote mines, and retail goods from ports to towns. Each part of the state contributes distinct capabilities shaped by geography, industry and infrastructure.

The movement of the diverse commodities produced in Queensland is supported by a multimodal system to ensure goods move productively, reliably and safely across local, national and global supply chains.

Queensland's freight system is enabled by an integrated network of infrastructure owners, managers and operators across road, rail, ports and airports. The system is planned, operated and maintained across all levels of government and private entities. Freight operators rely on this interconnected infrastructure to move goods across modes.

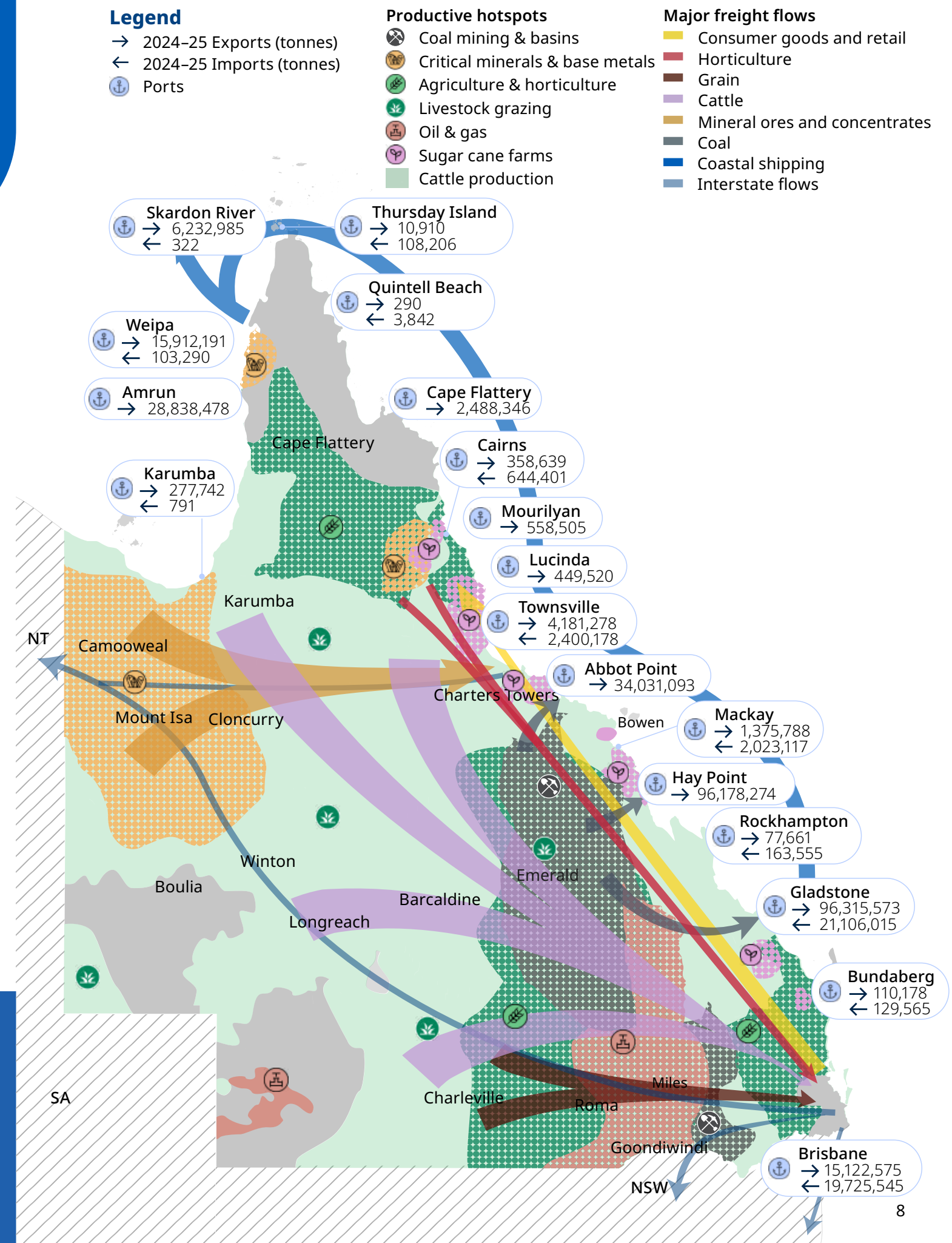
The road and rail networks form the backbone of our economy, connecting local industries to interstate and global supply chains. Rail provides the scale and efficiency to move freight over longer distances, while road provides flexibility and economies of scale for shorter distances.

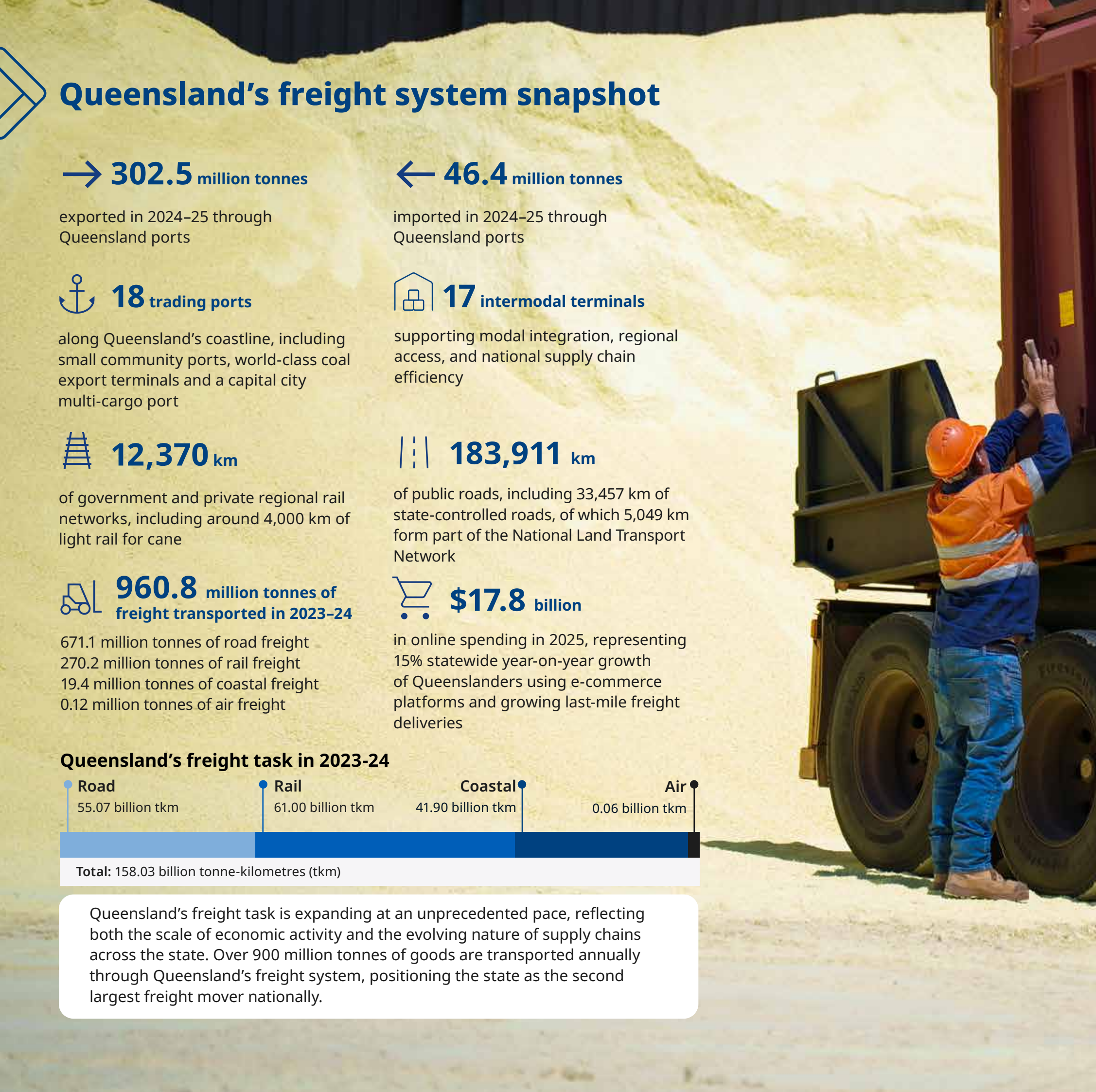
Our 18 coastal trading ports handle hundreds of millions of tonnes of cargo each year, making Queensland a gateway for international trade.

Air freight is vital for urgent deliveries and supporting remote communities, especially when disasters strike. Air freight in Queensland is a low volume but high value component of the state's overall freight task, underpinning global export and import pathways as well as supporting essential supply chains across regional and remote regions.

Inland intermodal terminals and freight hubs enable efficient cargo transfer between transport modes, improving network flexibility and supporting long-distance haulage alongside last mile delivery.

The Queensland Government is investing more than \$13.3 billion in infrastructure upgrades and incentives to strengthen the freight system, ensuring it keeps pace with Queensland's growing needs and continues moving goods productively, reliably and safely across rail, roads, ports, and air. Regional Transport Plans are being updated across Queensland, responding to the distinct needs, industries and priorities of each region.





Queensland's freight system snapshot

→ **302.5** million tonnes

exported in 2024–25 through
Queensland ports

 **18** trading ports

along Queensland's coastline, including
small community ports, world-class coal
export terminals and a capital city
multi-cargo port

 **12,370** km

of government and private regional rail
networks, including around 4,000 km of
light rail for cane

 **960.8** million tonnes of
freight transported in 2023–24

671.1 million tonnes of road freight
270.2 million tonnes of rail freight
19.4 million tonnes of coastal freight
0.12 million tonnes of air freight

← **46.4** million tonnes

imported in 2024–25 through
Queensland ports

 **17** intermodal terminals

supporting modal integration, regional
access, and national supply chain
efficiency

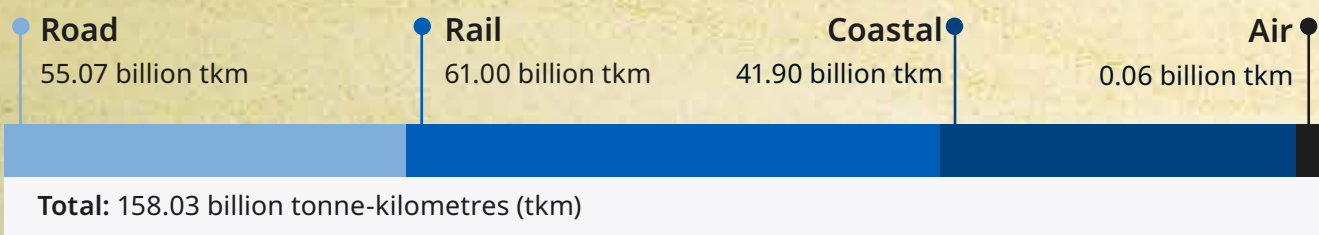
 **183,911** km

of public roads, including 33,457 km of
state-controlled roads, of which 5,049 km
form part of the National Land Transport
Network

 **\$17.8** billion

in online spending in 2025, representing
15% statewide year-on-year growth
of Queenslanders using e-commerce
platforms and growing last-mile freight
deliveries

Queensland's freight task in 2023-24



Queensland's freight task is expanding at an unprecedented pace, reflecting both the scale of economic activity and the evolving nature of supply chains across the state. Over 900 million tonnes of goods are transported annually through Queensland's freight system, positioning the state as the second largest freight mover nationally.

The freight and logistics sector is a significant contributor to Queensland's economy. The transport, postal and warehousing industry alone adds more than \$25 billion in value, with over 126,000 people employed in freight, logistics and supporting services across metropolitan and regional areas.

Beyond its direct economic impact, the freight and logistics industry underpins the operations of other sectors by facilitating the movement of essential inputs such as agriculture, livestock and extractive resources. It also plays a growing role in supporting communities and businesses across urban and regional areas through the distribution of parcels and time-sensitive goods by increasingly complex, last-mile delivery networks.

Queensland's primary production volumes in 2024–25

 **35.6** million tonnes of agricultural and horticultural production

 **13.5** million head of beef cattle

 **332.0** million tonnes of extractive resources

 **11.9** million tonnes of petroleum-based products distributed

Queensland's freight future

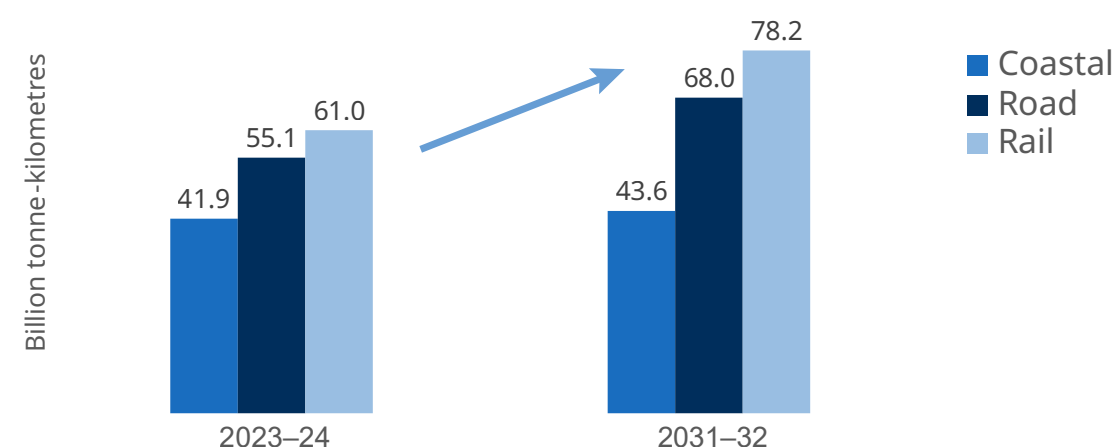
Queensland's future prosperity depends on a productive, reliable and safe freight system that keeps pace with growth.

As Queensland's economy diversifies and major events and technology shifts drive further change, freight volumes and patterns are becoming more intense around South East Queensland and more specialised across regions.

Managing this growth without compromising safety, reliability or community amenity requires a high-performing, multimodal and increasingly digital network.

Forecast freight growth to 2032

The freight task is projected to grow by 20 per cent by 2032, driven by population growth, large energy and resource projects, sustained mining exports and ongoing construction in both South East Queensland and regional centres.



Road freight is expected to continue carrying a significant share of growing freight volumes due to its flexibility and critical role in servicing urban, regional, and first and last mile freight movements. Rail freight will continue to be underpinned by bulk commodity volumes, reflecting ongoing global demand for Australian resources with further opportunities to attract new freight.

While coastal shipping is projected to grow more moderately, it will remain an important component of Queensland's freight system, supporting efficient movement of bulk commodities between industrial precincts and consumable commodities to regional and remote communities.

Queensland's economy is diversifying and so is the freight task

As new industries grow and existing ones evolve, the mix, volume and direction of freight flows are shifting across Queensland's corridors, precincts and regions.



Critical minerals and processing

Greater demand on rail and at ports as higher-value mineral products move to export.



Agribusiness and food processing

Greater requirements for refrigerated and palletised freight from regional plants to distribution centres, ports and airports.



Construction and infrastructure

Growing construction task to deliver infrastructure, housing and industrial development across the state.



Advanced manufacturing

Greater volumes of high-value inputs and finished products needing secure handling and predictable port and airport access.



E-commerce and parcels

Denser last-mile delivery activity around cities and regional centres, especially in South East Queensland.



Renewable energy and storage

More oversize loads, bulk materials and specialist equipment for major energy projects across the state.

Brisbane 2032: Freight opportunity and legacy

The Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games (Games) will drive one of Queensland's largest infrastructure and event programs. Freight volumes into South East Queensland and selected regional centres will rise as venues, housing, transport upgrades and event operations take shape.



Enduring legacy

Upgraded corridors, terminals and interfaces that can improve reliability beyond 2032.



Tighter operating windows

Planned works, lane restrictions and event-time changes impacting access and scheduling.



Balance of requirements

Balance of Games requirements with everyday travel needs for business, residents and visitors.



Higher pre-2032 volumes

More construction inputs and equipment moving into South East Queensland and selected regional centres.

TMR's Games planning is focused on three key objectives:

1

Secure, reliable and safe movement for Games athletes and the Games Family in line with commitments provided with the Olympic Host City Contract.

2

Convenient high-capacity passenger transport for spectators and workforce.

3

Keeping our cities moving for business and personal travel.

Planning for the Games will focus on improvements across the transport system, providing the foundation for Games transport solutions and delivering a lasting legacy for Queensland. The Games impacts on transport networks and operations will vary from location to location, but all will require reliable freight movement.

As planning progresses, and details on Games venues and precincts and the competition schedule is confirmed, engagement with key stakeholders including the freight sector and transport operators will progressively increase to inform development of Games operational plans.

As we understand more about impacts of the Games transport solutions, TMR will work with the freight and logistics industry on operational plans to minimise disruption to freight movement during and leading up to the event.



Artist impression – Victoria Park Precinct Draft Legacy Plan



Build Regions — Connect Queensland

Unlock regional economic development by improving market and supply chain access through better infrastructure for key resource, agricultural and manufacturing regions.

Regional Queensland's growth stems from producers and processors moving goods reliably to gateways. Northern, southern and western areas rely on long-haul movements to coastal gateways. Coastal centres depend on reliable two-way flows for agriculture and manufacturing. South East Queensland links regional production to distribution centres and export supply chains. When access is inefficient, costs rise and regional investment is harder to secure.

Strengthening these links means providing safe, all-weather access on priority corridors, along with efficient intermodal connections that reduce handling and delay. It also requires fit-for-purpose oversize and overmass (OSOM) access and port interfaces capable of receiving large components safely and efficiently. Reliable links support employment, investment and service access in the regions, and they underpin Queensland's export performance. Successful delivery depends on everyone in the supply chain working together.

The Queensland Government is working with stakeholders and delivering for regions by enhancing rail competitiveness, protecting and upgrading regional road corridors, supporting fuel security through the Queensland Fuel Security Plan, and improving reliability and affordability of freight into our most remote communities.

What we heard

Support for regional industries

Some regional industries are impacted by network constraints. Route capacity and limited options for agriculture and livestock movement across regional Queensland can create network inefficiencies. Insufficient access for OSOM freight is hampering the energy rollout required for regional Queensland.

Remote supply chains

Freight to remote communities is often extremely costly, with some regions experiencing reliability challenges. Outer Torres Strait communities pay more than the mainland and experience delays. Over 95 per cent of Torres Strait freight is delivered by sea with no redundancy, exposing supply chains to disruption, with impacts exacerbated during extreme weather events.

Industrial land

The long-term protection of industrial land and strategic freight corridors in planning processes is essential to support Queensland's growing freight needs and economic development. Safeguarding industrial land is vital for efficient supply chains, enabling future logistics investment and creating opportunities for industry growth across the state.

Rail access charges

High rail access charges and inconsistent service reliability discourage modal shift from road to rail. For example, the Mount Isa Line's comparatively high rail access charges due to its location. This presents structural and commercial barriers which prevent operators from investing in rail-based solutions, despite the environmental and long-term economic benefits.



Build Regions — Connect Queensland

Objectives and actions

Objective 1: Make rail a more competitive option for freight

1. Deliver a new Rail Freight Container Incentive Scheme, trialled for three years, offering up to 50 per cent rebate on below-rail access charges for freight customers opting to move an additional 250 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU) per annum on the North Coast Line, Mount Isa Line and Southern Queensland systems. **(New initiative)***
2. Maintain a 10 per cent subsidy for all customers on the Mount Isa Line for a period of four years to encourage greater rail freight volumes. **(New initiative)**
3. Maintain a reduction in rock phosphate access charges on the Mount Isa Line, which is 30 per cent cheaper than the standard bulk rate, to encourage growth of the North West Minerals Province. **(New initiative)**
4. Deliver a new discounted diesel fuel access charge on the Mount Isa Line to promote the movement of fuel on rail. **(New initiative)**
5. Maintain the rail freight subsidy on the Central West rail line to address freight related cost-of-living pressures for communities in Central West Queensland.
6. Deliver new small- to medium-scale open access intermodal freight terminal developments across the state, with priority focus to deliver new unloading/loading facilities along the Mount Isa Line and at the Port of Townsville. **(New initiative)**
7. Collaborate with industry to fast-track the unlocking of underutilised rail infrastructure in strategically located precincts to support rail freight connectivity. **(New initiative)**
8. Develop flexible access arrangements that help manage customer cost and risk within existing regulatory frameworks and to support mode shift to rail on key freight corridors. **(New initiative)**

Objective 2: Improve the reliability and affordability of remote and regional freight services

9. Optimise supply chains to address multimodal agriculture transport network constraints through government and industry collaborating on opportunities for improvements towards safety, productivity, and innovation across the system. **(New initiative)**
10. Maintain the road-based freight subsidy in South West Queensland to address freight related cost-of-living pressures for communities in need of support.
11. Optimise the retail subsidy scheme for communities in the Cape York and Outer Torres Strait Island communities.
12. Partner and coordinate with the National Indigenous Australians Agency to reduce the cost of goods under its Low Cost Essentials Subsidy Scheme for eligible stores throughout Northern Queensland.
13. Collaborate across government and industry to deliver the National Fuel Security Plan and the Queensland Fuel Security Plan. **(New initiative)**
14. Collaborate with the Australian Government to optimise the effect and application of the Remote Air Services Subsidy Scheme so that transport-disadvantaged communities receive maximum benefit from the timely delivery of essential air freight, including medical supplies, and pharmaceutical and pathology items. **(New initiative)**
15. Deliver upgraded maritime infrastructure in Northern Queensland to improve the condition and long-term viability of assets, and support ongoing and reliable freight services. **(New initiative)**
16. Maintain and review schemes such as the Grain Harvest Management Scheme and Queensland Sugar Mill Mass Management Scheme to assess opportunities for load tolerance concessions above regulated mass limits while protecting road infrastructure and promoting road safety.
17. Collaborate across government to deliver the Connecting Queensland Fund 2025–2029 to support growth in service frequency, capacity and development of new international aviation routes, including for air freight, into Queensland's international airports. **(New initiative)**
18. Investigate options to improve the effectiveness and delivery of freight subsidy schemes, including consideration of new approaches to better support communities experiencing cost-of-living pressures. **(New initiative)**

* Terms and conditions will apply. Visit www.queenslandrail.com.au

➤ **Objective 3: Safeguard industrial land and freight corridors**

19. Ensure state and local government planning processes adequately integrate and embed freight requirements and align with the National Urban Freight Planning Principles, to strengthen corridor protection and land-use decisions to preserve land, including industrial land, required for effective and long-term freight operations. **(New initiative)**
20. Work with planning agencies to deliver freight related objectives in Regional Plans and to ensure state and regionally significant industrial areas, including State Development Areas and Major Enterprise and Industrial Areas, are protected from the encroachment of incompatible development. **(New initiative)**

➤ **Objective 4: Grow regional economies through upgrading beef supply corridors**

21. Deliver works under the Queensland Beef Roads Investment Strategy in collaboration with the Australian Government and local governments, sealing priority links to improve weather resilience and safety for all road users and opening key north-south alternate freight routes.
22. Maintain the Cattle Rail Contracts program to maximise the amount of cattle transported by rail, helping producers retain affordable, reliable access to market.

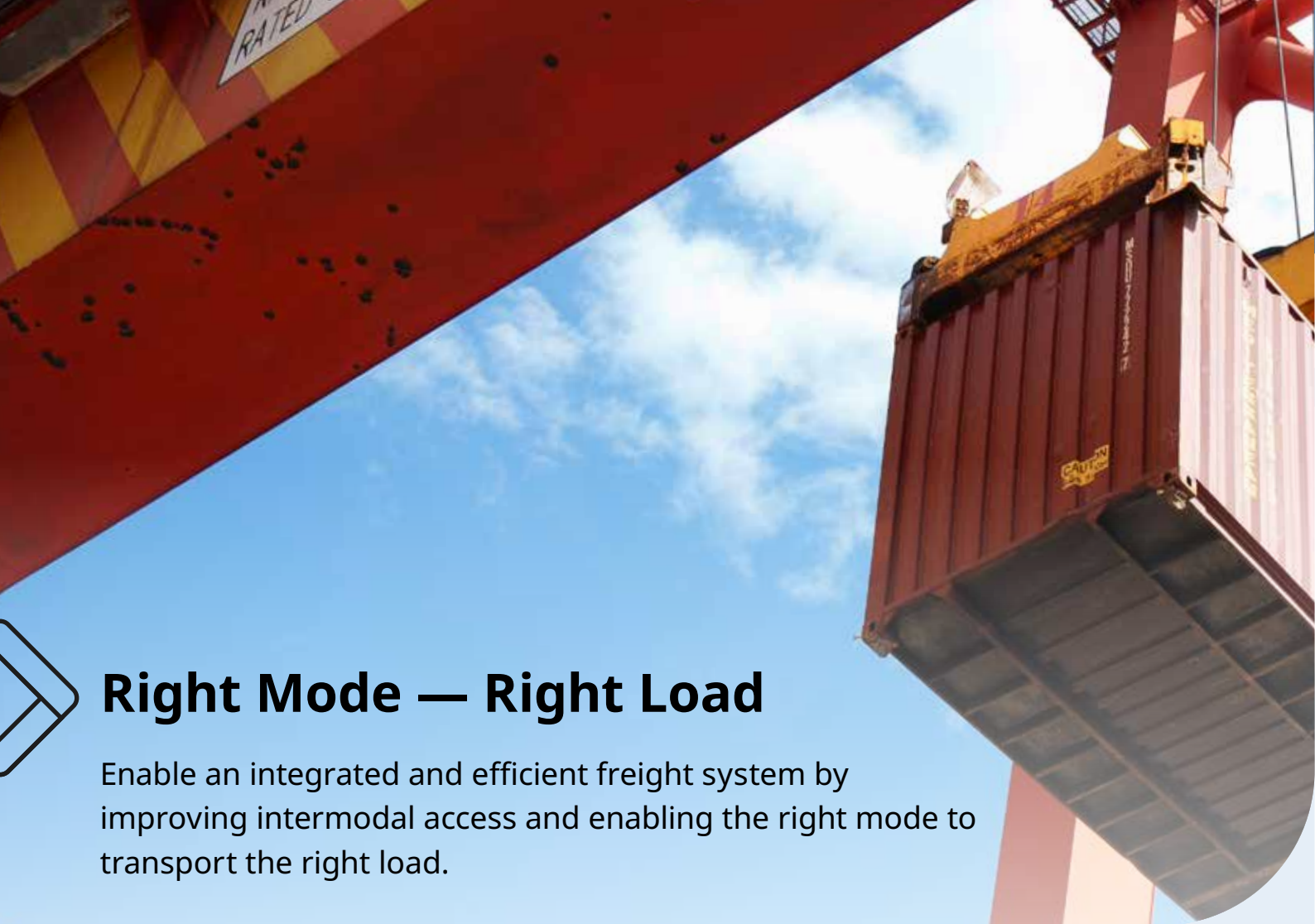
➤ **Objective 5: Enable OSOM access for the energy build-out in regional Queensland and interstate via key Queensland Ports**

23. Undertake planning for OSOM priority routes across the state to inform corridor investment planning and upgrades, and to provide industry clear guidance on preferential routes and operating conditions. **(New initiative)**

➤ **Objective 6: Align government, regulators and industry on strategic freight priorities through a streamlined and structured engagement model**

24. Enhance strategic coordination and decision-making through engagement with regulators, operators, industry and peak bodies—via the Queensland Ministerial Freight Council, its sub-committees and other collaborative forums such as the Bruce Highway Advisory Council—to align priorities, unblock bottlenecks and address freight system issues across Queensland.





Right Mode — Right Load

Enable an integrated and efficient freight system by improving intermodal access and enabling the right mode to transport the right load.

An integrated, multimodal freight system benefits Queensland's freight and logistics industry and its customers. Road remains essential for first and last mile and regional tasks, growing long-haul and bulk movements on rail and sea can ensure the freight task grows sustainably into the future.

The solution is not one freight mode, but the right freight mode connecting the right locations, at the right time. While road transport is essential for shorter distances and door-to-door connectivity, rail freight can offer significant advantages in terms of cost efficiency and reduced emissions compared to road freight.

While mode decisions rest with industry, the priority for government is to make those choices practical. Through dependable port, rail and terminal access, fit-for-purpose connections, and operating conditions, we can enable more efficient and cost-effective freight movements.

The Queensland Government is continuing to support industry by improving last mile freight links, strengthening access to ports, delivering targeted upgrades to enhance freight efficiency and encouraging greater uptake of long-haul rail across the state.

What we heard

Last mile connectivity and access to ports

Last mile connectivity and inefficient access to ports are factors which can restrict mode optimisation. Poor connections between major freight corridors and production zones, and insufficient last mile access to ports, influence operators to use longer, less efficient routes. This potentially increases costs and emissions but also reduces the effectiveness of modal shift and intermodal solutions.

Rail capacity and attractiveness

There are impediments to the adoption of rail with key challenges needing to be addressed, including:

- certainty in planning, particularly around intermodals and key corridors like the North Coast Line
- capacity issues across the North Coast Line as a result of infrastructure and non-infrastructure causes
- financial barriers to rail adoption for long-haul freight.

Train path competition in South East Queensland

Freight rail access in South East Queensland is increasingly constrained by the growing demand for passenger services. Prioritised passenger rail during peak periods limits available windows for freight movements which influences some freight operators to shift loads onto the road network.

Intermodal facilities

A shortage of intermodal facilities and capacity inhibits efficient multimodal movement across the network. Access to rail through intermodal capacity is fundamental in creating the interconnected freight environment required for rail to deliver its role as a long-distance, high-capacity freight mode.





Right Mode — Right Load

Objectives and actions

Objective 7: Support the long-term viability of rail networks

25. Collaborate with industry and ports to encourage usage of port precinct common user infrastructure and identify and unlock supply chain constraints to grow the export of critical minerals and high demand bulk volumes to global markets. **(New initiative)**
26. Improve the safety and capacity of the rail networks through the deployment of Digital Train Control Technology including progressing the rollout of the European Train Control System across South East Queensland, advancing planning for the Regional Train Protection Project, and supporting Queensland's transition to nationally interoperable digital signalling as a key action under the National Rail Action Plan.
27. Collaborate with the Australian Government and Queensland Government agencies on future opportunities for proposed intermodal sites at Ebenezer and Gowrie.
28. Accelerate planning considerations for a future intermodal facility north of Brisbane to support increasing freight demand in South East Queensland.

Objective 8: Reliable and efficient access to Queensland's ports, supported by targeted road and rail upgrades

29. Undertake detailed planning of targeted interventions on the South East Queensland rail network, including to the Port of Brisbane, to improve freight capacity and reliability, and to manage competing passenger and freight service requirements.
30. Prioritise planning for targeted improvements to the capacity and reliability of freight links to regional ports to accommodate higher productivity vehicle access and improved rail freight connections. **(New initiative)**
31. Undertake below rail assessment of grain rail infrastructure and investigate first and last mile rail upgrade requirements at Mount McLaren, Mackay and Gladstone ports to improve operational performance and increase the use of rail to support the end-to-end grain supply chain. **(New initiative)**

Objective 9: Improve rail network reliability, capacity and operational efficiency

32. Continue statewide planning, on a short and long-term basis, for rail network improvements, prioritisation and investment to improve operations, resilience, reliability, and to investigate expansion opportunities.
33. Prioritise the delivery of upgrades on the Mount Isa Line to improve network reliability, productivity, travel times, access and resilience, and support growth of the North West Minerals Province. **(New initiative)**
34. Progress rail corridor plans to ensure cost-effective, targeted and sequenced prioritisation of rail investment for all rail freight corridors throughout Queensland. **(New initiative)**





Recover Faster — Build Back Better

Advance freight system resilience through targeted measures that plan for disruption, adapt to volatility, and embed safety and long-term sustainability.

Queensland's freight task spans long coastal corridors and inland connectors that are frequently impacted by severe weather events. Communities need critical links to stay open longer and return to service quickly, noting some towns only have single access points and can experience multi-week impacts. Infrastructure works are being undertaken across the state to improve safety, drainage and flooding resilience to reduce the time it takes to get back to normal operations.

Resilience planning requires a national approach with cross-border coordination essential. Better coordination, pre-location of resources and the establishment of alternative freight routes, such as coastal shipping and aviation, can assist with managing these seasonal weather events.

The Queensland Government is working to support industry and communities at times of disruption by improving resilience on regional freight routes, delivering timely disaster repairs, implementing safety upgrades, developing improved systems and processes for responding during network disruptions, supporting industry sustainability efforts, and identifying opportunities to strengthen supply chain resilience.

What we heard

Susceptibility to severe weather events

Queensland's geographic and climatic variability renders the state's freight corridors highly susceptible to floods, cyclones and heatwaves. Disruptions across the transport system immediately impact regions. Industries and communities are isolated, diversionary detours carry heavier loads, delivery windows grow, and essential supplies are delayed. Across the state, ageing infrastructure, inadequate maintenance and lack of alternative routes worsen situations during events.

Insufficient redundancy

Redundancy and all-weather routes are urgently needed to maintain supply continuity during disruptions. Proactive investment is required for all-weather detours, regional storage facilities, and alternative routes for vital corridors (e.g. Hughenden–Richmond, Richmond–Winton, Malanda–Atherton Road and Kennedy Developmental Road). The Inland Freight Route presents a unique opportunity to help address this lack of redundancy across the State through improved route efficiency and connectivity to other key freight routes and links, such as the Warrego Highway.

Systemic fragility

Systemic fragility in recovery processes leads to prolonged supply chain disruptions, especially in remote and regional areas. After major weather events, essential goods like food and fuel are prioritised. Broader supply chains (e.g. construction materials) experience weeks-long backlogs with system capacity compounding the problem in regions such as Far North Queensland and the Outer Torres Strait Islands.

Planning and investment

Embedding resilience in planning and investment decisions is essential for long-term network reliability. Industry is advocating for "build back better" principles in disaster recovery to ensure that repairs incorporate upgrades rather than simply restoring outdated standards.

Insufficient heavy vehicle facilities

Inadequate rest facilities for road transport providers compromise both safety and compliance. Livestock carriers, in particular, highlighted the difficulty of finding suitable rest areas with proper amenities and separation from high-noise activities. The lack of infrastructure forces drivers to stop in unsuitable locations, increasing risks for both road safety and animal welfare.



Recover Faster — Build Back Better

Objectives and actions

Objective 10: Improve access and resilience of regional road freight routes

- 35. Strengthen existing program-based approaches for planning and investment for key freight routes to prioritise and sequence upgrades, maintenance and infrastructure improvements, including for critical structure upgrades, for each route. **(New initiative)**
- 36. Deliver the Country Roads Connect program (22 projects over three years) to seal priority links and upgrade recurring closure and safety hotspots. This will enable community connectivity and resilience, improved emergency access, and regional economic productivity.
- 37. Continue to progress works on the Kennedy Developmental Road to strengthen network redundancy, improve wet-season reliability and corridor resilience and lift safety and freight efficiency for North and North West Queensland.
- 38. Progress works on the Cape York Region Package with the Australian Government.
- 39. Deliver staged upgrades along the Inland Freight Route from Mungindi to Charters Towers, strengthening the route as an inland freight alternative to improve safety and freight efficiency for regional communities and industry.

Objective 11: Communicate effectively during network disruptions to ensure continuity of critical freight operations

- 40. Deliver the statewide flood forecasting and warning system to enhance Queensland's capability to predict and respond effectively to flooding events and improve intelligence on when roads may be safe to reopen. **(New initiative)**
- 41. Establish a freight network disaster contingency plan to support industry decision-making during network disruptions and maintain continuity of essential goods via alternative connections. **(New initiative)**

Objective 12: Make disaster repairs more resilient on state-controlled freight routes, rail networks and interfaces

- 42. Apply 'build back better' principles to inform planning, when practicable, through eligible programs to treat recurrent closure sites on freight corridors, including investigating and adopting new solutions for more resilient infrastructure.

Objective 13: Support industry to progress sustainable and effective freight decarbonisation

- 43. Collaborate with government and industry to progress sustainable and effective biofuels related initiatives, supporting the freight industry with alternative, sustainable fuel sources. **(New initiative)**
- 44. Assess and identify opportunities in collaboration with industry to expand the Zero Emissions Heavy Vehicle scheme network on state-controlled roads on key strategic routes. **(New initiative)**

Objective 14: Improve supply chain resilience

- 45. Evaluate opportunities for establishing regional distribution hubs to support remote areas challenged by seasonal supply chain disruptions. **(New initiative)**
- 46. Establish a collaborative operating framework for joint aviation, including opportunities for drones, and coastal shipping service delivery to communities during disaster responses. **(New initiative)**

Objective 15: Improve safety outcomes on freight corridors

- 47. Deliver the Bruce Highway Targeted Safety Program by providing prioritised safety treatments between Gympie and Cairns. **(New initiative)**
- 48. Deliver new and upgraded road-side heavy vehicle infrastructure, including rest areas, decoupling pads and wash down facilities, to reduce fatigue risk and support heavy vehicle operations on priority corridors and key freight routes. **(New initiative)**
- 49. Implement the Safer Roads, Better Transport Plan.
- 50. Maintain appropriate treatments for the safe and reliable operation of level crossings, and avoid introducing new level crossings into the rail network where possible.



Drive Opportunity — Grow Capability

Boost supply chain performance through targeted investment, fit-for-purpose infrastructure, streamlined access, and skilled workforce capability.

Queensland's producers, manufacturers, freight forwarders and distributors compete on reliability and time. Capability depends on places, people and practice. Freight works best when terminals and hubs have the right connections and skilled workforces to ensure safe and efficient operations in depots, on the road and in yards.

With clearer standards and harmonised settings, operators can have certainty about operational conditions. Co-investment and partnering on critical infrastructure can enable more efficient and productive freight movements, better connect regional businesses, and support regional employment opportunities.

The Queensland Government is supporting industry by strengthening heavy vehicle access and regulatory consistency, streamlining access decision-making, supporting regional freight hubs and interstate productivity, progressing port access assessments, and growing the capability of Queensland's freight and logistics workforce.

What we heard

Permit and heavy vehicle challenges

Queensland's heavy vehicle permit system is identified by stakeholders as complex and inconsistent, creating significant administrative inefficiencies and hindering operational improvements. Issues reported include the current permit process being highly repetitive and non-transparent, conservative thresholds resulting in a high volume of routine movement applications, and some permits requiring multiple renewals.

Heavy vehicle access and regulation

Heavy vehicle access to major ports is constrained by inconsistent regulations and infrastructure limitations. Additionally, the lower weight thresholds of Queensland compared to other states creates border crossing inefficiencies. This hinders efficient truck movements, often influencing freight operators to divert shipments to New South Wales, where pre-approved routes are more accessible.

Skill shortages

Acute skills shortages and an ageing workforce are constraining Queensland's freight and logistics sector. Specialised roles (such as heavy vehicle drivers, rail operators and maintenance technicians) are increasingly hard to fill, with retirements outpacing new entrants and younger workers deterred by perceptions. This shortage is especially pronounced in regional areas.

Effluent management

Effluent management for livestock transport is a significant operational and compliance challenge for Queensland's freight system. The lack of designated wash-down and effluent disposal sites along major freight corridors forces drivers to either travel significant distances off-route or risk non-compliance. This gap increases environmental risks and public concerns, and also complicates fatigue management for drivers during livestock standstills.

Night-time freight access

Across the state, industry is being constrained by a lack of night-time access to key freight hubs and ports.



Drive Opportunity — Grow Capability

Objectives and actions

Objective 16: Provide certainty and consistency for road freight users on key freight routes

- 51. Establish the vision for Performance Based Standards vehicle access on key freight corridors, collaborating with the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator and industry, to give industry longer-term investment certainty. **(New initiative)**

Objective 17: Grow and skill the freight workforce

- 52. Implement the Queensland Transport and Logistics Workforce Strategy and Action Plan with industry. This includes promoting the sector as a rewarding career and strengthening entry pathways and engagement for diverse job seekers.
- 53. Work with national partners to grow the rail skills pipeline through consistent training, mutual recognition of competencies, and expanded apprenticeships and cadetships under the National Rail Action Plan.

Objective 18: Assess what's needed to enable heavier road access to Queensland's major ports

- 54. Evaluate opportunities for higher load vehicle access into key trading ports in consultation with industry, port corporations, the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator and local government to assess options, safety cases and indicative costs. **(New initiative)**

Objective 19: World-class ports that are future-ready and capable of strengthening Queensland's trade and connectivity

- 55. Prioritise a strategic review of regional ports to ensure their function, planning and future investment is responsive to regional and statewide economic growth opportunities. **(New initiative)**
- 56. Collaborate with the Port of Brisbane in planning to accommodate the next generation of larger and higher capacity vessels. **(New initiative)**

Objective 20: Cut permit turnaround times and improve operational efficiency of the road freight sector

- 57. Implement the National Automated Access System in Queensland to provide heavy vehicle operators with real-time access information through a vehicle specific network map, replacing current permit processes, and providing operators with digital route maps and access conditions to support end to end seamless access creating a more efficient customer-focused heavy vehicle access system across Queensland. **(New initiative)**
- 58. Undertake planning for a new heavy vehicle facility, including decoupling capability, on the Warrego Highway between Ipswich and Toowoomba to address capacity constraints at the Gatton facility to meet growing demand, and to ensure ongoing safe operations, efficiency and animal welfare. **(New initiative)**

Objective 21: Maintain safe, consistent heavy vehicle access settings

- 59. Collaborate with industry, the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator, and other participating Heavy Vehicle National Law jurisdictions to investigate opportunities to develop livestock loading and access frameworks, and to identify measures within existing and emerging access frameworks that may support safe, productive and sustainable livestock movements, including access to farms and saleyards. **(New initiative)**
- 60. Collaborate with industry to explore practical opportunities for safe and sustainable heavy vehicle access improvements through innovation, technology and evidence-based approaches.

Objective 22: Support improved interstate higher productivity vehicle access for enhanced productivity and efficiency

- 61. Prioritise planning for unlocking an 'eastern-coast strategic freight spine' enabling higher productivity vehicles to safely access key strategic localities in Queensland from Melbourne and Sydney. This will initially prioritise focus on the western connection via the Warrego Highway to support inland connections. **(New initiative)**

Objective 23: Support the livestock industry to maximise productivity, animal welfare and compliance with biosecurity requirements

- 62. Deliver new, fit-for-purpose livestock effluent disposal facilities on key road freight routes to support productivity, and industry compliance with environmental and biosecurity regulation and to ensure animal welfare. **(New initiative)**



Drive Opportunity — Grow Capability

Objectives and actions

➤ Objective 24: Ensure the Brisbane 2032 Olympics and Paralympic Games are supported by a transport system which provides for the reliable and effective movement of freight

- 63. Prioritise corridor management and protection initiatives on North Coast–Brisbane–Gold Coast freight routes, to support reliable Games-time and legacy access. **(New initiative)**
- 64. Engage with the freight and logistics industry to coordinate operational planning for the continuous and effective movement of freight before and during the Games. **(New initiative)**

➤ Objective 25: Improve flexibility and efficiency of urban freight operations

- 65. Work with industry, councils and relevant government agencies on opportunities to trial easing restrictions on hours of operation and planning for freight in urban locations that support off-peak operations, supporting increasing freight demand and freight movements during and leading up to the Games. **(New initiative)**





Integrated Planning — Future Networks

Build a shared, secure digital foundation for Queensland's freight system so industry, councils and government can use consolidated network and climate data to plan, operate and invest more productively, reliably and safely.

Data and digital systems underpin a modern freight system. Real-time data, digital platforms and emerging technologies are vital for planning future growth and having a shared understanding of Queensland's future freight system.

Unlocking greater private sector investment could also be a game-changer for Queensland's freight system. By providing clear priorities, streamlined approvals, and risk-sharing frameworks, there may be an opportunity to attract private capital to accelerate infrastructure upgrades, boost innovation, and deliver real results for industry and communities.

Balancing infrastructure capacity constraints with safe network operations requires an appropriate level of compliance and assurance to enable a productive and reliable freight system. Safe, fair and compliant freight operations are essential to a productive freight system, which includes collaboration with regulators and industry to address emerging compliance risks.

The Queensland Government is committed to delivering a safer, smarter and more integrated freight network through data-driven planning, transparent annual freight reporting, and collaborative partnerships with industry and local councils.

What we heard

Insufficient data availability

Data availability is inconsistent across Queensland's freight system, making it difficult to plan, monitor, and improve safety and efficiency. The lack of real-time and integrated data hampers effective decision-making and risk management. The absence of periodic and publicly available statewide data impacts the ability for government and regulatory bodies to confidently plan and invest in the network.

Risk modelling

Given the frequency of climate impacts in Queensland, there is a need for improved freight system and climate risk modelling to support planning and investment decisions. Robust risk modelling can help identify vulnerable corridors, inform targeted infrastructure upgrades, and support proactive investment in redundancy measures such as all-weather detours and regional storage. Embedding risk modelling into planning frameworks shifts from reactive recovery to proactive resilience, reducing the impact of disruptions on supply chains and communities.

Private-sector investment

Private sector appetite for co-investment in Queensland's freight infrastructure is strong, but often constrained by regulatory uncertainty and unclear risk-sharing arrangements. Greater transparency in investment prioritisation and clearer signals on long-term priorities would help unlock private capital for critical upgrades, especially for smaller but high-impact projects.

Freight movement inefficiencies

Regional freight in Queensland is often moved inefficiently due to limited transport alternatives, with goods transported from regional production zones to central hubs—such as Brisbane—for consolidation, before being shipped back out to other regional areas.





Objectives and actions

➤ Objective 26: Guide freight planning and investment through improved data, modelling and system insights

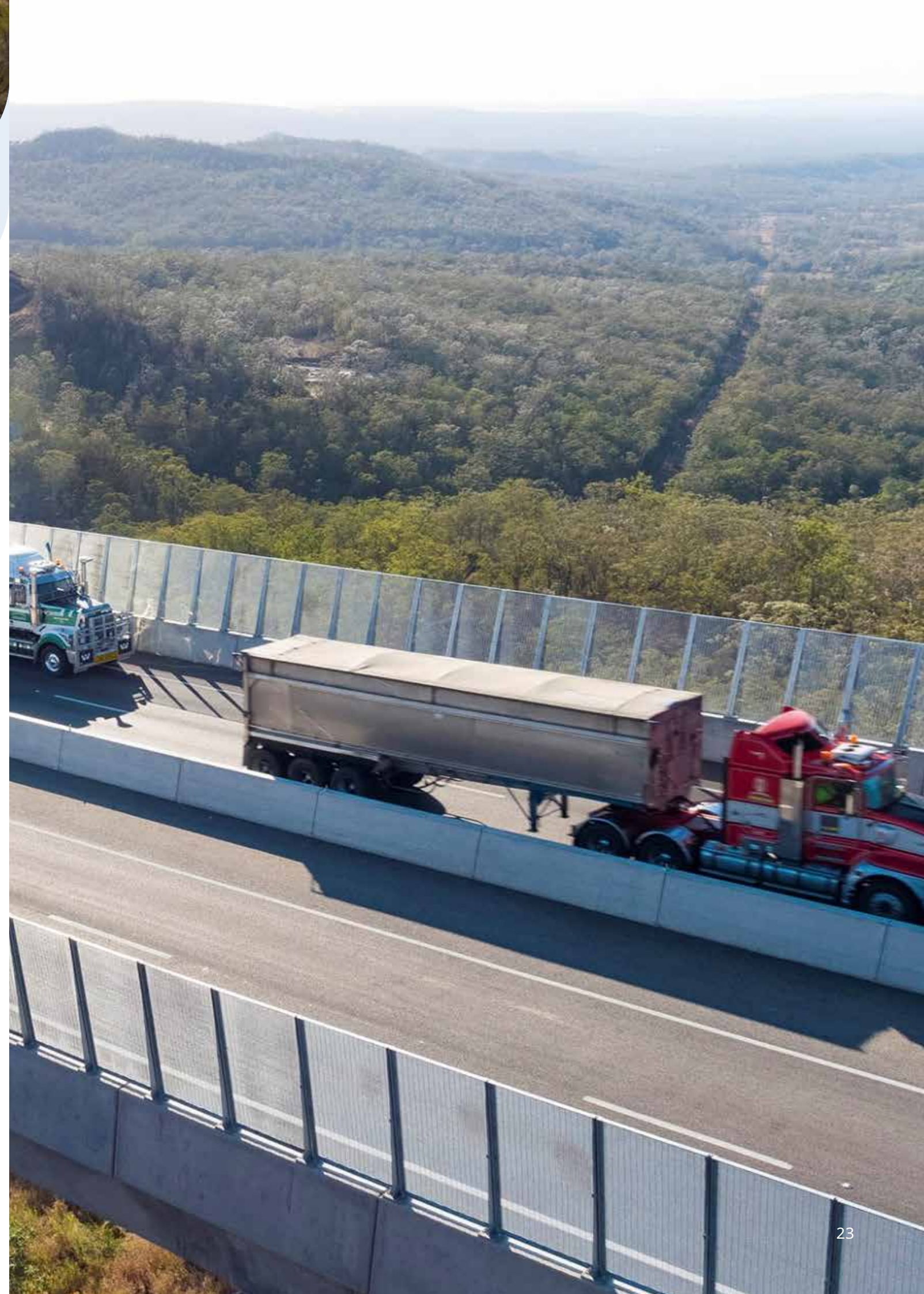
- 66. Establish a Queensland-wide freight system modelling program integrating national freight models, commodity volumes and multimodal freight operations to inform policy, planning and investment decision-making. **(New initiative)**
- 67. Establish a Data Partnership Program with operators, industry, councils and government agencies to support consistent data sharing, initially with Queensland Rail and port authorities. **(New initiative)**

➤ Objective 27: Partner with industry and local government to collaborate on improved freight planning and investment

- 68. Enhance collaborative planning and solution development with industry, government and community to improve freight system outcomes.
- 69. Establish processes and partnership arrangements that enable market-led proposals for co-investment between government and industry to deliver priority freight infrastructure projects. **(New initiative)**

➤ Objective 28: Improve transparency and understanding of Queensland's freight network performance and outcomes

- 70. Publish the Queensland State of Freight Snapshot including indicators, measures of success and updates on implementing the actions of this plan. **(New initiative)**





Strategic alignment

Queensland is a significant contributor to Australia’s freight system while supporting other industry led initiatives. The QFDP aligns Queensland’s freight planning with the guiding principles and objectives of the *National Freight and Supply Chain Strategy and National Action Plan*, the *National Rail Action Plan*, the *National Urban Freight Planning Principles*, and informs a range of state, regional and local government plans.

National Freight and Supply Chain Strategy

Sets national priorities for an efficient, safe, resilient and data-driven freight system.

Queensland Freight Delivery Plan

Queensland’s implementation mechanism for the National Freight and Supply Chain Strategy. Aligns Queensland’s freight planning with national priorities.

Outcomes for Queensland and Australia

A freight system that moves goods productively, reliably and safely for freight customers and communities.



	Governance	Freight strategy and investment	Linked strategies and plans
National	• Infrastructure and Transport Ministers’ Meeting • Infrastructure and Transport Senior Officials’ Committee • National Transport Commission • National Heavy Vehicle Regulator • Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator	• National Freight and Supply Chain Strategy 2025 • National Freight and Supply Chain Action Plan 2025–2029 • National Rail Action Plan • Infrastructure Policy Statement	• National Infrastructure Investment Program • National Urban Policy • National Urban Freight Planning Principles • Heavy Vehicle Productivity Plan 2025–2030 • National Fuel Security Plan
Statewide	• Queensland Government’s objectives for the community • Queensland Ministerial Freight Council (QMFC) • QMFC Heavy Vehicle Sub-Committee	• Transport Coordination Plan 2017–2027 • Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program 2026–27 to 2029–30	• Primary Industries Prosper 2050 • Delivering Queensland’s Critical Minerals Future 2026–30 • 2032 Delivery Plan for the Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games • Queensland Rail Strategic Plan FY2026–2030 • Queensland Fuel Security Plan
Regional	• Roads and Transport Alliance • Regional Roads and Transport Groups • Remote Areas Consultative Group	• Regional Transport Plans • Local government transport and infrastructure plans • Traffic management plans • Movement and Place Policy	• Regional Plans • Regional Infrastructure Plans • Prosper 2050 Action Plans

What success looks like

Success will be measured through delivering against the actions outlined in the QFDP and monitoring the outcomes of these actions through various mechanisms across the freight system in Queensland. These will be captured in the proposed Queensland State of Freight Snapshot. While we anticipate this reporting process to evolve with the plan, initial indicators have been established for the outcomes of this plan.

Outcomes



Productivity



Reliability



Safety

Indicators



Volume of freight moved on rail
(tonnes per kilometres travelled)



Kilometres travelled by Higher
Productivity Vehicles



Number of unplanned closures
and number of days of unplanned
closures on key freight routes



Number of fatalities and
hospitalised casualties by freight
mode



QUEENSLAND FREIGHT DELIVERY PLAN 2026