



Transport Position Statement

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

Regional Development Australia – Northern Rivers (RDA-NR) believes that transport is about access and a means to an end, and decisions about transport therefore affect social equity and amenity and the health and wellbeing of our communities – where and how we live, work, learn and recreate. Effective transport planning, investment and management are fundamental to our collective impact on the environment’s life support systems and have far-reaching implications for income distribution and welfare dependency.

RATIONALE

RDA-NR is a non-profit community-based and regionally focused organisation that connects people and businesses in our region to opportunities through partnerships focusing on community, environment and economy.

RDA-NR recognises that in the context of the region’s proximity to the rapid economic development and population growth in South East Queensland, transport is a key element of the Northern Rivers regional economy with major implications for both current and future public sector and commercial investment decisions and land use planning.

The Northern Rivers is a car-dependent region with few transport options. Limited public transport options fragmented infrastructure for cycling and walking and geography place the region at a disadvantage. Increasing, improving and integrating all modes of transport, including telecommunications, will improve the accessibility of the community.

An effective transportation system plays a key role in engendering social inclusion as it provides access to education, health and other services. It provides an opportunity for people to move within the region and employment prospects are broadened by wider transportation opportunities and transportation infrastructure is a very important consideration in the impending population growth forecast for the Northern Rivers region.

PRINCIPLES

RDA-NR recognises that the region’s transport systems and infrastructure are a core element of the Northern Rivers economy. The following position statement reflects the Board’s belief that transport, together with communications, are fundamental foundations for maintaining a healthy and dynamic regional economy.

RDA-NR:

- advocates for improvements to transport infrastructure, systems and capability in the region and encourages prioritisation of such improvements through the development of a regional transport strategy;

- recognises a holistic, integrated and long-term approach to transport is needed to address the economic, social and environmental needs and challenges of the region;
- advocates that sustainability, land use, settlement pattern and the environmental, cultural and economic characteristics of the region should drive transport planning, investment and management decisions;
- acknowledges that transport planning and development should aim to maintain a stable and predictable investment environment for regional industries including agriculture, tourism and residential development;
- recognises that efficient, cost-effective and convenient transport links to South East Queensland must be central to transport planning and development;
- encourages transport planning to be an integral part of a comprehensive approach to major infrastructure development including telecommunications, energy and water distribution;
- encourages maximisation of existing infrastructure for multi-modal traffic flows;
- advocates for improved transport options to include walking, cycling and carpooling;
- supports transport development that balances the needs of stakeholders and avoids usage conflicts to ensure higher standards of safety;
- advocates for policy reviews to address current transport constraints and barriers (e.g. licensing and contracting of bus routes);
- advocates that transport infrastructure projects should be subject to full and public cost accounting prior to approval;
- recognises the need for an adaptive capacity to deal with rising fuel costs, changing fuel options and the need to reduce emissions; and
- recognises that transport development should encourage behavioural change by all categories of users to achieve more energy efficient and environmentally sustainable outcomes.

DATE OF ADOPTION

Version 1 adopted by Regional Development Australia – Northern Rivers 11 December 2009

Revised version adopted by Regional Development Australia – Northern Rivers 10 February 2012

DATE OF REVIEW

February 2014

A framework for action for the transport sector and industry can be found in the *Northern Rivers Regional Industry and Economic Plan* (pages 37 – 39) and the *Sustain Northern Rivers Transition Model For A Low Carbon Future, Sustain Transport*.