



ADVOCACY

# TRANSPORT



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# SHARED VISION

Quilpie Shire Council and the Queensland Government share a clear and aligned vision for a more connected, resilient and equitable Western Queensland. Both levels of government recognise that strong regional transport networks and accessible mobility are essential foundations for economic growth, community wellbeing and long term population sustainability. This deputation seeks to advance two priority initiatives that directly contribute to the State's broader objectives of improving regional connectivity, strengthening supply chains and ensuring that rural and remote Queenslanders have fair access to essential services.

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## BACKGROUND

### RESILIENT INLAND FREIGHT NETWORK – ADAVALE–BLACKALL ROAD

Quilpie Shire Council has identified the Adavale–Blackall Road as a critical missing link in Queensland's Western Freight Route. The remaining 210 kilometres of unsealed road restricts reliable, year round freight movement and limits the efficiency of a corridor that has the potential to serve as a major inland connector from Far North Queensland through Townsville and Cairns to Adelaide.

Sealing this route would create a flood resilient, all weather freight corridor that significantly reduces travel distances and travel times, with modelling indicating potential reductions of up to 246 kilometres and approximately three hours per journey. These improvements would lower fuel consumption and emissions, enhance supply chain reliability for the agricultural and resources sectors, support improved road safety, bolster defence capabilities and unlock new economic opportunities across Western Queensland.

This proposal builds on recent State and Federal investments, including the sealing of the Kennedy Development Road and the upgrade of the South Comongin Crossing. Together, these projects form a cohesive strategy to strengthen the resilience and productivity of Queensland's inland freight network.

### AIRFARE AFFORDABILITY FOR REGULATED LONG DISTANCE AIR SERVICES

At the 2024 LGAQ Annual Conference, Quilpie Shire Council received strong statewide support for increased State Government investment in regulated long distance air services.

These services are essential for rural, remote and First Nations communities, providing access to medical care, education, employment and government services.

Despite the intent of regulated contracts to cap maximum fares, inflationary pressures have resulted in significant price increases. Recent fares have reached as high as \$938 one way between Birdsville and Brisbane, placing essential travel beyond the reach of many residents. While metropolitan Queenslanders benefit from heavily subsidised fares as part of cost of living initiatives, remote and first nation communities are experiencing increasing isolation and inequity.

The consequences are profound. Residents are delaying or foregoing medical appointments, educational opportunities and employment obligations. Others are forced to undertake road journeys of up to 1,000 kilometres to access basic services. Affordable air travel is not discretionary for remote Queensland, it is a fundamental service that underpins community viability and regional participation in the broader Queensland economy.

## DELIVERING THE VISION

- 1) Quilpie Shire Council seeks a long term commitment from the Queensland Government to contribute 20 per cent of the total cost of sealing the Adavale–Blackall Road over a ten year period, enabling the staged delivery of this critical freight link.
- 2) Quilpie Shire Council seeks increased State investment in regulated long distance air services to ensure that regional, remote and First Nations communities have equitable access to affordable and reliable air travel.

## OUR PARTNERSHIP

The sealing of the Adavale–Blackall Road advances the commitment to explore innovative transport solutions that deliver value for taxpayers and reduce travel times for Queenslanders. A more efficient western freight route strengthens the State's transport network and enhances the productivity of regional industries.

Improving the affordability and reliability of regulated air services supports enhancements to public transport frequency, reliability and safety, particularly where affordability is essential to maintaining patronage and ensuring equitable access. Supporting remote communities through more accessible air travel reinforces the State's commitment to fairness, connectivity and regional resilience.