



WESTERN ENABLING NETWORK (WEN)

ADVOCACY INTRODUCTION

**JOIN US IN MAKING
THE WESTERN
ENABLING NETWORK
A REALITY**

Let's build a viable alternative inland freight route—one that improves resilience during natural disasters, reduces travel times, lowers freight costs, and supports the continuity of essential services and regional industries.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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WESTERN ENABLING NETWORK (WEN) – ADVOCACY INTRODUCTION

The Western Enabling Network (WEN) is a strategic partnership between Blackall Tambo Regional Council, Bulloo Shire Council and Quilpie Shire Council, established to deliver a cost effective, resilient inland freight corridor that strengthens regional connectivity, enhances transport reliability, and unlocks long term economic growth across Western Queensland and Australia's national supply chain.

WEN represents a low cost, high return investment in critical enabling infrastructure. By completing and sealing key links across the western road network, WEN will provide a viable alternative inland freight route—one that improves resilience during natural disasters, reduces travel times, lowers freight costs, and supports the continuity of essential services and regional industries. This corridor is not simply a road project; it is a nation building asset that underpins agricultural productivity, mining exports, national defence logistics, tourism access, and the liveability of remote communities.

Spanning from Far North Queensland through Charters Towers, Barcaldine, Blackall, Adavale, Quilpie and Thargomindah, and connecting southwards to Adelaide, Sydney and Melbourne, the WEN offers measurable efficiency gains. The corridor saves 246 kilometres and approximately three hours in freight travel time between Townsville and Adelaide compared with existing routes. These savings translate directly into reduced fuel consumption, lower transport costs, and improved road safety by distributing heavy vehicle movements across a more resilient network.

Recent government commitments demonstrate strong momentum toward completing this strategic corridor. These include sealing the final 11 kilometres of the Kennedy Development Road, completion of the Quilpie–Adavale Road in February 2025, commencement of flood immunity upgrades at South Comongin Crossing in early 2027, and an \$8.51 million investment to seal 14 kilometres of the Warri Gate Road in 2026–27. These works form the foundation of a nationally significant freight spine but the final links must now be delivered.

To complete the WEN, a 10 year strategic investment of approximately \$30 million per year is required to seal the remaining 176 kilometres of the 211 kilometre Blackall–Adavale Road and the remaining 102 kilometres unsealed sections of the 189 kilometre Warri Gate Road. This investment will convert what is currently an unreliable bush track into a modern, high capacity freight route capable of supporting billions of dollars in annual economic activity.

THE 5 QUESTIONS

The partnership between the three remote Shires provides clear answers to four of the five questions:

1 WHO WILL DELIVER THE WORKS?

Councils have proven capability and experienced workforces that consistently deliver value for money outcomes for State and Federal partners while supporting local employment and regional contracting.

2 WHAT WILL THE PROJECT ACHIEVE?

Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)'s TraNSIT modelling for the Western Enabling Network (WEN) shows clear benefits from sealing remaining road sections, with a 592% increase in new users shifting to the upgraded corridor. The WEN supports \$1.91 billion in freight, moved on 19,528 trailers carrying 382,382 tonnes across 2,228 supply chains and 97 commodities, demonstrating its national significance. Livestock and horticulture account for 48% of the increased freight task, reinforcing the corridor's importance to Australia's food, fibre and export industries. The Blackall Saleyards, an organic-accredited hub processing 120,000 cattle annually, relies on safe, efficient road access to support domestic and live-export markets.

Sealing the WEN reduces freight costs, cuts emissions by 7,008 tonnes of CO₂, improves animal welfare and strengthens food security for regional, remote and First Nations communities, delivering high-value national productivity gains.

3 WHY INVEST?

This investment will support substantial direct and indirect employment, stimulate regional business expansion, and enable new industries. The following project are:



The Quilpie Travel and Transport Precinct is a nationally significant regional logistics hub designed to modernise freight movement, improve heavy-vehicle safety and connectivity, and strengthen Australia's outback supply chains by integrating road, rail and aviation infrastructure in one purpose-built location;



The Blackall Wool Scour a proposed modern wool-processing facility that would revive local manufacturing, create regional jobs, and strengthen Western Queensland's agricultural value chain by scouring and preparing wool for domestic and export markets; and



The Dark Skies Rocket Project a nationally significant commercial sub-orbital launch initiative that recently secured state funding to expand its testing infrastructure, strengthen Australia's sovereign space-capability pipeline, and support ongoing high-altitude rocket development in one of the country's most suitable remote launch environments.

4 HOW WILL THIS BE FUNDED?

This nation building infrastructure will be funded through a 10-year Australian and Queensland governments partnership funding \$30 million annually across the Blackall–Adavale Road and Warri Gate Road, transforming unsealed, weather vulnerable tracks into a nationally significant inland freight corridor. This model would align with the Australian and South Australian governments jointly funded 80:20 for the Strzelecki Track Upgrade and Sealing Project.

5 WHEN WILL THIS BE FUNDED?

This is the question now before our State and Federal partners. The Western Enabling Network is ready, the councils are prepared, and the economic case is compelling. What is required is a shared commitment to deliver the final links of this transformative national freight route.

10 year strategic investment of \$300 million (approximately \$30 million per year)

CASE STUDY / QUILPIE SHIRE COUNCIL – ADAVALE RED ROAD SEALING

In 2020, Council launched an accelerated strategy to complete the remaining 40% of the Adavale Red Road with a 7.0-metre-wide double coat seal. This project is not just about road construction—it is about building resilience, improving safety, and unlocking economic and social opportunities for the region.

This ambitious program combines funding from the Australian Government's Roads to Recovery (RTR) Program, the Queensland Government's Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme (TIDS) and Council's own contributions.



This critical infrastructure project ensures all-weather flood resilient road between Quilpie and Adavale. Additionally, the upgraded road enhances access to Hell Hole Gorge National Park, a major tourist attraction in the region, supporting local tourism and economic growth.

Over the five financial years, significant progress was made. The table below demonstrates that 34 kilometres was sealed with an average cost of \$224,500 per kilometre.

FY	Expenditure (\$)	Km Sealed	Cost/km (\$)
2020/21	1,321,940	4.68	282,500
2021/22	1,329,020	6.32	210,300
2022/23	1,408,253	6.40	220,000
2023/24	2,374,342	9.90	239,800
2024/25	1,223,164	6.80	179,900
Total	7,656,719	34.10	224,500

