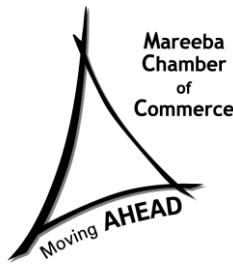


Mareeba Chamber of Commerce Media Release



For immediate release

27 November, 2018

Mareeba Chamber of Commerce joins calls for Kuranda Range to be added to national highway network

The Mareeba Chamber of Commerce has joined the chorus of organisations calling on the Queensland Government to lobby for the inclusion of Kennedy Highway to Mareeba to the National Highway Network.

Recently, the Queensland Government's National Land Transport Network (NLTN) submission to the Federal Government sought the extension of the National Highway from Cairns Central Business District to Smithfield.

Mareeba Chamber of Commerce president Joe Moro said while the government is congratulated for proposing the extension, it fell short of delivering the benefits to a road which was performing well below par in terms of efficiency.

"Mareeba's position as the largest urban centre in Far North Queensland outside Cairns (*Australian Bureau of Statistics Census, 2016*) is a credit to the work done by all levels of government in helping the community grow and prosper," Mr Moro said.

"Central to maintaining and strengthening this growth is an efficient, safe road network.

"The Cairns to Mareeba section of the Kennedy Highway (including Kuranda Range Road) is a critical transport link for a number of industries including, but not limited to, freight, business, tourism and agriculture.

"The range alone carries approximately 9,000 vehicles per day, an increase of around three per cent every year (*Cummings Economics, 2018*).

"In its current condition, the road is constraining heavy vehicle movements, which could negatively impact the region's growth."

Mr Moro said the Cairns to Mareeba section including the Kuranda Range played a major role in carrying freight between Cairns and the hinterland area being the Atherton Tablelands.

"It is the most efficient route over the range, and is part of a link that services around 60,000 people with road transport," Mr Moro said.

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“However, a glaring anomaly is the fact that Kuranda Range Road is unable to handle the standard freight efficient type of vehicle on Australian roads, B-doubles and will continue to unless there is significant investment in the road.”

“While we are primarily concerned with freight transport, the chamber fears the lack of a freight efficient transport network will have detrimental effects on the growth of Mareeba and the Atherton Tablelands, and potentially act as a cap to major investment opportunities.”

Mr Moro said extending the national highway to include the Cairns to Mareeba section of the Kennedy Highway including Kuranda Range Road would help unlock various federal funding streams to support the roads upgrade.

Ends

For further information, contact Joe Moro on 0418 966 960.