

RPS

TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE FOR THE SUNSHINE COAST

Survey Results
MAY 2017

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Cover image: Maroochydore Boulevard Bridge (*Image courtesy: Sunshine Coast Council*).

1 Executive Summary

The Sunshine Coast population currently stands at approximately 350,000 residents in 2017. Projections see a steady increase over the next decades with an average growth of about 8,700 per year.

The Queensland Government Statistician's Office (QGSO) projects the population increase to **514,927** by 2036 with annual growth rate estimated at 1.9% (QGSO, 2017).

Given these figures, there is no doubt that the Sunshine Coast will have continued issues associated with growth, and the resulting infrastructure demands have been recognised by a number of the region's government agencies, Councils and key stakeholders.

Transport infrastructure is a key ingredient in the future growth and success of the region. Key figures indicate a growing economy and an influx of people - requiring increases in infrastructure to cope with the demand for services, business growth and employment.

RDA Sunshine Coast, as a leader in the economic planning of the Sunshine Coast region and working with these organisations, has identified transport as a key issue for resolution in order to support this future growth and economic development and progress.

RDA Sunshine Coast have been working with all levels of government to develop a united voice on integrated transport for the region. In November 2016, RDA Sunshine Coast prepared and released an Integrated Transport Discussion Paper for community and stakeholder comment.

In its discussion paper, RDA Sunshine Coast recognises that providing transport infrastructure will require funding, and identified two main sources - taxpayers or users - utilising mechanisms such as tolls and value capture for private investment.

This paper was widely promoted in the local media and on social media channels and was used to widen the conversation, gain more information from the local community, and to support the RDA Sunshine Coast survey of local residents that ran from November 2016 to March 2017.

The key results of the survey indicate that the highest priority for the region is the upgrade of the Bruce Highway. The survey also found that people were highly likely to utilise public transport, and the train to Brisbane, if it were more efficient. Respondents were also in favour of private funding or ownership of infrastructure if it meant faster delivery.

768 people responded to the survey and, of these, 58.3% said that upgrading the Bruce Highway was the most pressing project to relieve congestion for Sunshine Coast residents. This was followed by the North Coast Highway Duplication at 29.8% of respondents; 12.8% ranked the CAMCOS as most pressing; and 5.3% ranked the Mooloolah River Interchange (MRI) as most pressing, followed by light rail (4.4%), and the Sunshine Coast International Airport (2.4%).

Respondents were also asked which were the least pressing infrastructure priorities. The least pressing at 35.8% was the international airport, followed by light rail at 24.9%.

Respondents were mixed about carpooling – with 27% saying they would, 40% saying no, and 33% undecided. Respondents comments indicated that if safety and convenience could be addressed, they may consider carpooling using an app.

Respondents were prepared to use the train to Brisbane if it were more efficient, faster, more comfortable and cheaper and were supportive of private funding or ownership of infrastructure (62% support) – however this did not extend to user pays funding with the survey results indicating that there is very little appetite for tolls.

There were also several unsolicited comments about government progress in transport infrastructure, with a number of respondents using the survey to express frustration at what they perceived was a lack of government decision making and action.

This report provides an analysis of the survey results, and includes qualitative information to provide a snapshot to highlight the back story to people's ratings and prioritisation of infrastructure.

RDA Sunshine Coast intends to release the report and use it in discussions with key organisations to develop a united voice on the priorities for regional infrastructure funding and construction.

Conclusion

RDA Sunshine Coast will continue to advocate for increased transport infrastructure funding, and alternate transport solutions such as improved public transport, carpooling, and electric bikes.

2 Integrated transport conversation

Regional Development Australia Sunshine Coast is part of a national network of 55 committees made up of local leaders who work with all levels of government, business and community groups to support the development of their regions.

This Australian Government initiative brings together all levels of government to support the development of regional Australia. RDA Sunshine Coast has a focus on the region's economic progression.

The Sunshine Coast has recently seen the completion of the Sunshine Coast University Hospital, and the commencement of projects including Maroochydore – The Bright City, Sunshine Coast Airport, Harmony and Aura. All of these developments are expected to be delivered within the next 20 years.

RDA Sunshine Coast, other tiers of government and key stakeholders have identified that the region's current transport infrastructure will not cope with this scale of development.

Accordingly, RDA Sunshine Coast initiated a conversation with the Sunshine Coast community to identify priorities for transport infrastructure projects, with the objective of having a collective set of priorities for regional transport infrastructure, and a common purpose to achieve funding to fast-track them.

2.1 Survey details and promotion

RDA Sunshine Coast conducted a self-selected survey from 15 November 2016 to 16 March 2017. Respondents were asked to complete the survey online on the RDA website.

The Survey was promoted through:

- § Local news articles in the Sunshine Coast Daily, My Weekly Preview and My Sunshine Coast.
- § The RDA Sunshine Coast Facebook page
- § RDA Sunshine Coast Twitter feed
- § RDA Sunshine Coast newsletter, December 2016
- § 17 local chambers of commerce
- § Sunshine Coast and Noosa Shire Councils

2.2 Survey respondents

768 people responded to the survey during the period and over 200 comments on social media were captured over this period.

Survey respondents were self-selected - i.e. they chose to respond to the survey because they had a motivation to do so. In this respect, the survey may not be representative of a broader sample population size if asked the same questions.

However, given the high number of respondents, and the common areas of frustration at traffic congestion and transport constraints expressed in voluntary comments, it is reasonable to believe that there is local community interest in the topic. It is possible that a significant number of people may experience similar views and frustrations in relation to transport and congestion on the Sunshine Coast.

3 Survey questions and results

3.1 Ranking of transport projects

RDA Sunshine Coast was interested in understanding the views of the community on where government should inject infrastructure spending to alleviate congestion and support regional growth and prosperity. It identified key infrastructure projects that had been proposed and discussed in public forums during the past few years, and asked respondents views on how to prioritise these.

Respondents were asked to rank in order from 1 to 6 the transport projects they considered to be the most pressing for the Sunshine Coast region (1 – most pressing, 6 – least pressing).

768 people responded to the survey.

The upgrade of the Bruce Highway was considered most pressing by a significant number of respondents (58.3%). Comments in the survey about the Bruce Highway also indicated a high level of frustration at traffic congestion and delays on the Highway; and an urgency for government to provide an upgrade as quickly as possible.

This was followed by the North Coast Rail Duplication at 29.8%.

The lowest score was for the international airport, indicating that people are more focused on their daily transport needs rather than international connections.

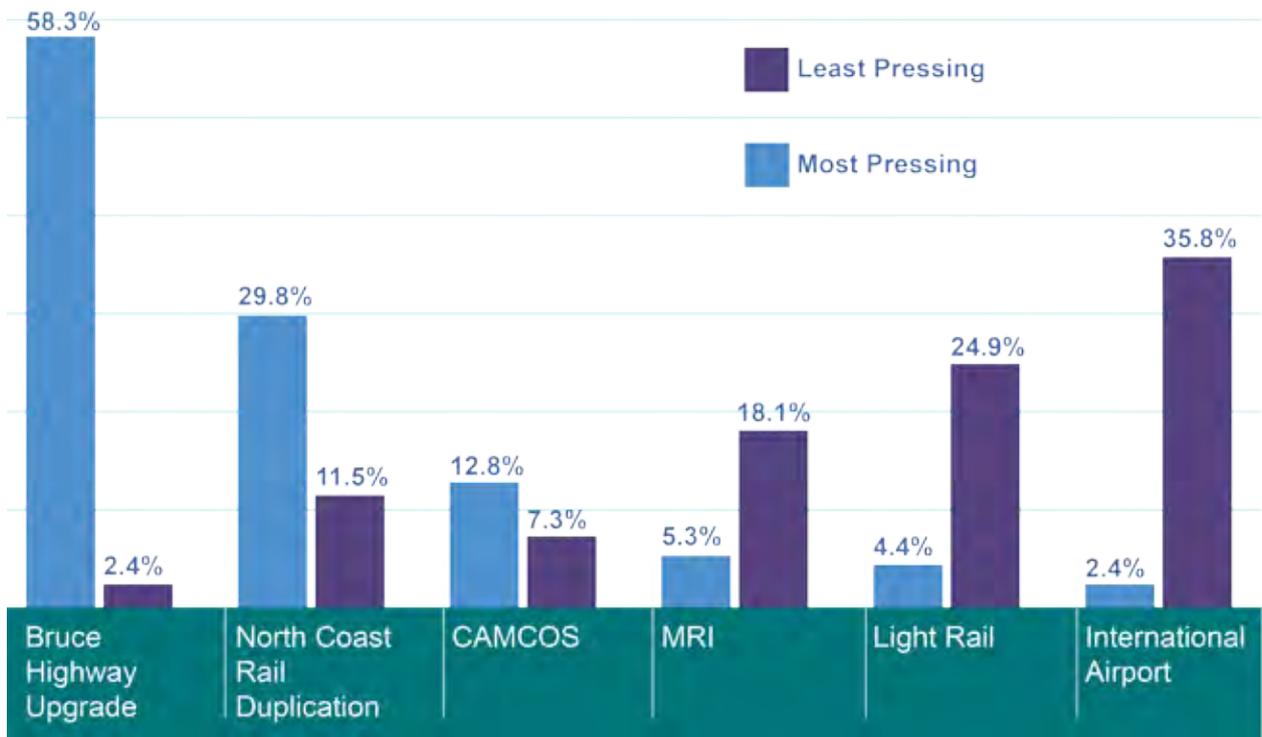


Figure 3.1 Project rankings

Priority list

It seems respondents were more interested in inter-regional connectivity (via Bruce Highway, North Coast Rail) rather than intra-regional connectivity (CAMCOS, MRI, light rail) and international connectivity.

One person commented “how will we get the international tourists around the coast when roads are inadequate?”.

Of the intra-regional travel CAMCOS was most favoured.

3.2 Responses to questions on usage and funding

Survey respondents were also asked questions regarding their transport usage including public transport and car-pooling, as well as questions on funding including private investment, and road tolls.

There was overwhelming interest in using public transport options if these were more efficient.

Respondents were also largely supportive of private infrastructure investment if it meant that projects could be delivered.

Car-pooling saw mixed results with 27% for, 40% against, and a third of respondents unsure whether they would use it.

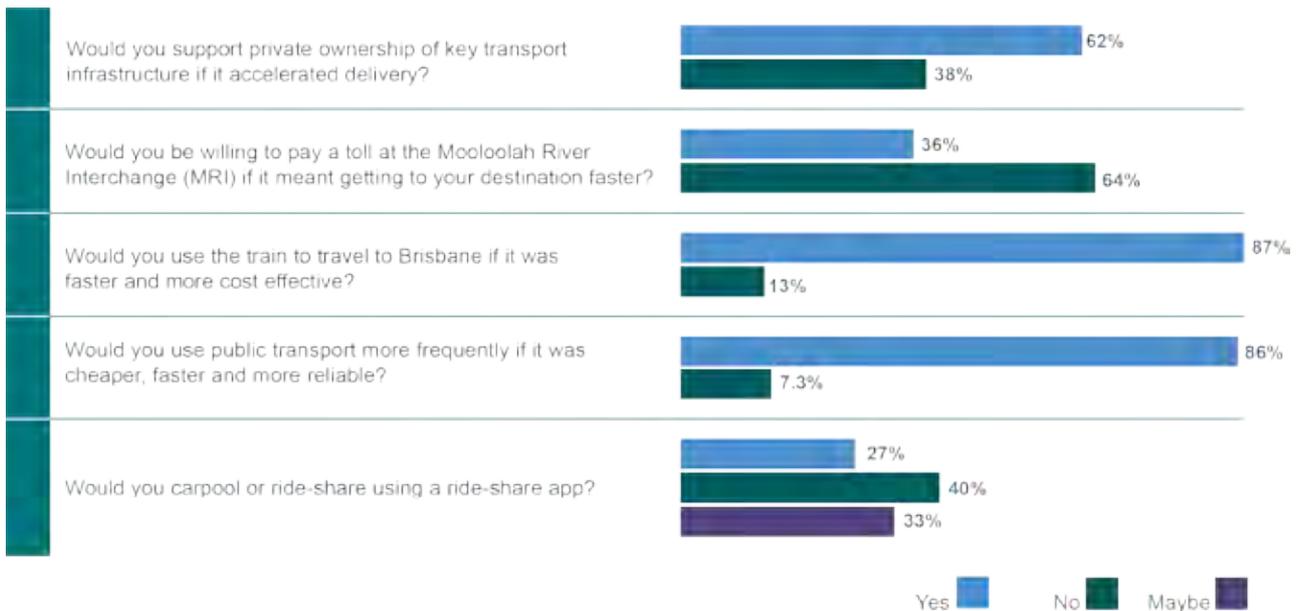


Figure 3.2 Responses to usage and funding questions

Private ownership & Tolls

It appears many hadn’t made the connection with private delivery and a user pays method of return on investment. The negative sentiment towards tolls indicates that “value capture” will be the best method for Public /Private partnerships.

4 Voluntary comments

RDA Sunshine Coast released a transport discussion paper in November 2016 which posed a number of questions. These questions were incorporated into the survey and respondents were asked to explain their reasons if they responded “no” to the questions.

Comments are not representative however the following provide a snapshot of the sentiments expressed most frequently:

4.1 Private ownership

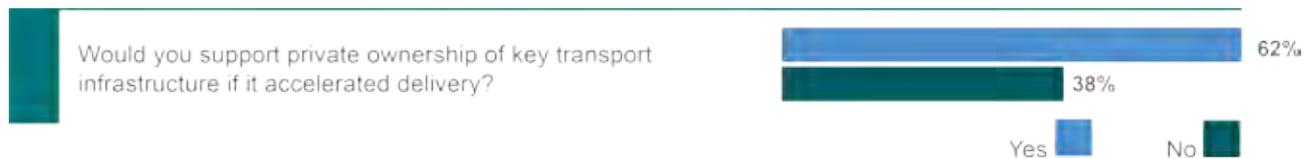


Figure 4.1 Survey response to private ownership question

The Transport Discussion Paper posed the questions of how to source funding, and highlighted the possibility of private and user funding. This was described as bridging the gap to combine with government funding to deliver projects in a more timely manner.

While 62% of respondents supported private ownership if it accelerated delivery there were some comments which were opposed to it. The survey only asked for comments if the answer was “no”, so comments are illuminating in that context.

“I don’t believe in PRIVATE ENTERPRISE owning PUBLIC ASSETS as we lose CONTROL and a say in what needs to be done.”

“Private ownership only brings hungry companies making money off the public.”

“Privatisation doesn’t work, we (sic) being privatised into poverty.”

4.2 Toll charges

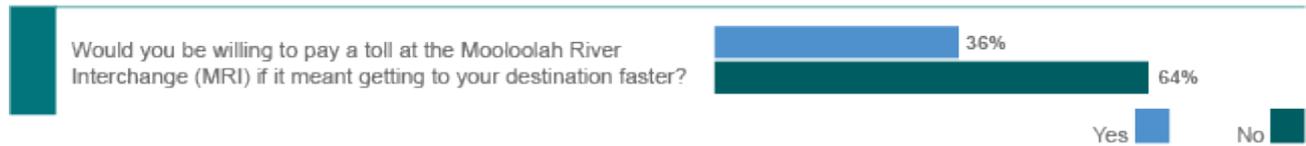


Figure 4.2 Survey response to toll charges question

Tolls were raised as user funding in the Transport Discussion Paper and the question was posed: Would you contribute on a user pays system for a faster alternate route than Nicklin Way or rather sit in a gridlock with possible delays?

When translated in to the survey question regarding user pays, the survey results indicated that there was very little appetite for introducing tolls and this is born out in the comments:

"Happy to pay parking and tolls".

"We don't need any more tolls".

"Depends on how much quicker private investment could deliver projects to warrant paying a toll."

"Need the Bruce Highway tolled depending on how far you travel."

"We already pay tolls to get out of Brisbane city via tunnel system."

"You would have to be joking to talk about a toll on the highway Caloundra to Sunshine Coast turnoffs."

"Tolls are not the way to go. Neither is private enterprise for public assets."

"Toll roads are out of the question as we now pay some of the highest rego in the country."

"Sunshine Coast historically speaking, Road Tolls are very iffy in 'our of Metro' areas and can become a political rod for the back of any gov't."

"Happy to pay tolls provided there is also a toll free alternative still available."

4.3 Brisbane train travel, and public transport



Figure 4.3 Survey response to public transport questions

The Transport Discussion paper posed the question: How can we make transport infrastructure more efficient?

This question related to shifting people from cars to public transport and identified that if there was a viable rail alternative to the Bruce Highway that this might take people from cars to rail.

The survey asked people if they would travel to Brisbane by train if it was more efficient and whether they would consider using public transport.

Survey results indicated a high level of support for Brisbane train travel and public transport - but for those who responded in the negative, the following comments were provided:

“No, vehicle needed for area travel.”

“Light rail only if they don’t interfere with road space and traffic flow.”

“I hate public transport.”

“Too inconvenient.”

“No time to.”

Respondents were asked to describe their answer only if it was no.

Public Transport & Trains

Even though the majority of survey responses suggest people would use public transport, a large behavioural shift is required to reduce the Sunshine Coast love affair with motor vehicles.

4.4 Carpooling

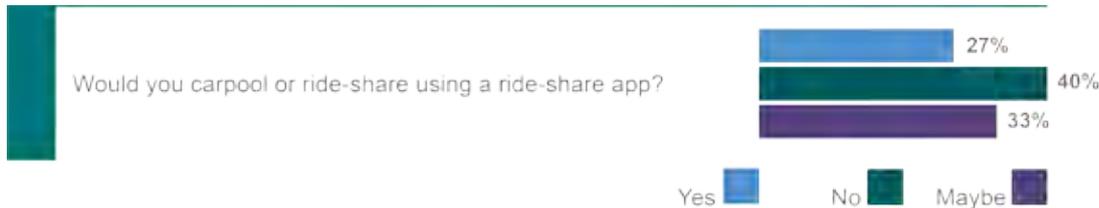


Figure 4.4 Survey response to carpool question

Technology improvements and innovation were also included in the Transport Discussion Paper, particularly as they related to carpooling using a ride share app, and the advent of driverless cars.

The paper posed the question: How do we capitalise on technology to reduce congestion?

The survey asked people if they would consider carpooling using a ride share app. Survey responses to carpooling were mixed with 27% saying they would car pool with a ride share app, 40% against, and 33% indicated that they may - which seems to indicate a “wait and see” approach to the concept. There were a number of comments which outlined why people would not do it. (Respondents were asked to describe their answer only if it was no.) Safety and convenience seems to be the main factors against using car-pooling.

“We are retirees and travel to Brisbane at irregular times”.

“Knowing who you share with. Safety?”.

“Not with strangers”.

“Some way of making it safe and secure – stranger danger”.

“Hard to carpool with kids”.

“My work hours are out of the ordinary”.

“Depends on person”.

“Being female I would not feel comfortable or safe using this option”.

“School drop off doesn’t allow for this”.

“Only with known people and if priority lanes were available”.

Car Pooling

Respondents comments indicated that if safety and convenience could be addressed, they may consider carpooling using an app.

4.5 Further comments

A number of respondents used the survey to express frustration at what they perceived a lack of government decision making and action.

"The coast has been well and truly let down by poor leadership regarding decent infrastructure. As the population increases this will only get worse".

"Hurry up and get on with it".

"The discussion needs to stop and action taken you are already too late promising and delivering these projects!!!".

"It is critical for the State to confirm its longer-term infrastructure priorities and lock these in to provide certainty to the community and potential private sector investors. It's also important for the State to firm up a policy Value Capture and genuine Road Pricing so the appropriate frameworks and price signals are in place".

"The people of Queensland must make all politicians understand that they just stop wasting money on sporting events., stadiums and other projects of no importance in the long term. Fix roads and public transport now! We pay enough in tax in various ways now – spend it on useful infrastructure!".

"When are we going to see some runs on the board? The inaction by politicians and local government over the past 15 years is a disgrace. It's incredible how our elected representatives have let us down regarding these important infrastructure assets. Catchup is not the right word, neroism is more like it".

Other key themes

"FIX THE PUBLIC TRANSPORT SYSTEM AND LEAVE THE ENVIRONMENT ALONE!".

"There are a number of property developers making a fortune on the coast - review the development fees and costs to include updated infrastructure".

"Urban streets in new developments are too small/ choked with cars in morning and afternoon rushes".

"Developers should be paying towards it all and if they don't want to cough up some money for it then don't have it approved".

"I feel there is way too much development along with housing development and not enough roads to support people".

"Developers should pay for some of the upgrades to the Bruce Highway to 4 lanes each way".

"We have lost so much of our natural ecology that our region is well on the way towards another Gold Coast".

"We won't need so much infrastructure if we stop excessive development".

Appendix A

Project descriptions

A1 Project Descriptions

A1.1 Mooloolah River Interchange (MRI) – Kawana Arterial and Sunshine Motorway Upgrade

The Mooloolah River Interchange project includes a new direct connection to the \$1.8 billion Sunshine Coast University Hospital precinct (under construction) via a new, land based, 2-lane road (Kawana Arterial) connecting Kawana Way at Parrearra and crossing the Mooloolah River to the upgraded Mooloolah River Interchange. The project will also provide a new direct connection for northbound traffic from Nicklin Way to Brisbane Road and Mooloolaba, and will upgrade the east-west section of the Sunshine Motorway from 2 to 4 lanes between Kawana Way interchange and the upgraded Mooloolah River Interchange.



Plate A1 Mooloolah River – McKenzie Bridge

A1.2 Caboolture to Maroochydore Corridor Study (CAMCOS)

The Caboolture to Maroochydore Corridor Study proposed a passenger rail service branching off the North Coast railway line at Beerwah and extending through Caloundra to Maroochydore. The Queensland Government proposed a major initiative to investigate an integrated land use and public transportation system for the Caboolture to Sunshine Coast region. The development of an integrated transportation system challenges traditional approaches to urban management and to quality of life enhancements. The Caboolture to Maroochydore Corridor Study recognises the importance of integrating transport networks and land use distribution. This study is the responsibility of the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR).

A1.3 North Coast Rail Duplication

The North Coast rail duplication includes the following:

- § Beerburrum to Nambour Rail Upgrade Project
- § Caboolture to Landsborough Rail Upgrade Study
- § Landsborough to Nambour Rail Project
- § Sunshine Coast and Caboolture line upgrades

A1.4 Sunshine Coast Light Rail

Sunshine Coast Council is undertaking a feasibility study for a light rail system between Maroochydore and Caloundra. Eventually the system could link most major destinations and attractions along the coast and connect with buses and trains. The focus of the light rail project is the provision of reliable, frequent and affordable public transport services, but brings with it a range of other positive spin-offs that will enhance our community connections, business activity, lifestyle and the environment.

A1.5 International Airport

The New Runway Project represents the ongoing development of an airport that has been operating and evolving for more than 50 years. As the region continues to grow, the airport needs to expand to meet the needs of the community and to continue to support the development of the region's economy. The project will deliver new facilities to meet current and future demand for greater direct flight access from destinations across Australia, Asia and the Western Pacific.



Plate A2 Sunshine Coast Airport Terminal (*Image courtesy: Sunshine Coast Council*).

A1.6 Bruce Highway Upgrades

The Australian Government is investing up to \$6.7 billion towards the ten year program of works on the Bruce Highway from 2013-14 to 2022-23, focusing on a range of specific upgrades and safety packages agreed with the Queensland Government as part of the Infrastructure Investment Programme.

The projects include major upgrades and realignments, strengthening and widening type works, plus a range of safety and efficiency measures to target sites with poor crash histories, widen pavements and to provide additional overtaking lanes and rest areas (Excerpt from Budget 2017-18¹, Commonwealth Government, p.164).

Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) is responsible for road infrastructure. The upgrade includes:

- § Bruce Highway Maroochydore Road to Mons Road
- § Bruce Highway (Pine River to Caloundra Road Interchange) Planning Project
- § Bruce Highway Upgrade – Caloundra Road to Sunshine Motorway
- § Caloundra Road Interchange – (currently underway)
- § Maroochydore Interchange



Plate A3 Bruce highway congestion (Image courtesy: Sunshine Coast Council)

¹ The Australian Government Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development 2017, Budget 2017-18: Regional Australia Driving our Economy 2017-18, Commonwealth of Australia 2017. ISBN: 978-1-925531-48-0.

Appendix B

Social Media

WHAT THE COAST HAS TOLD US

Transport Survey Feedback



If money is spent increasing frequency of bus and train connectivity between to and from Landsborough and Nambour train stations you could take thousands of cars off the road... less people on the highway. How... incentivise the travelling public.



Figure B1 Social media artwork

WHAT THE COAST HAS TOLD US

Transport Survey Feedback



The Bruce Highway is a nightmare. The "normal" daily congestion is outrageous, but when an accident happens - several times a week - then travel times to Brisbane or Brisbane Airport can blow out to four hours or more. It's impossible to attend a specific engagement (e.g. a medical appointment or flight) with any confidence. If it's a really important matter, one must go a day early and stay overnight in Brisbane. This is insane! Either fix the whole highway or provide a quick, reliable, frequent train service from at least Nambour - urgently! And I've only addressed the (in)convenience factor. People are dying or being maimed in these frequent road accidents on the Bruce.



Figure B2 Social media artwork

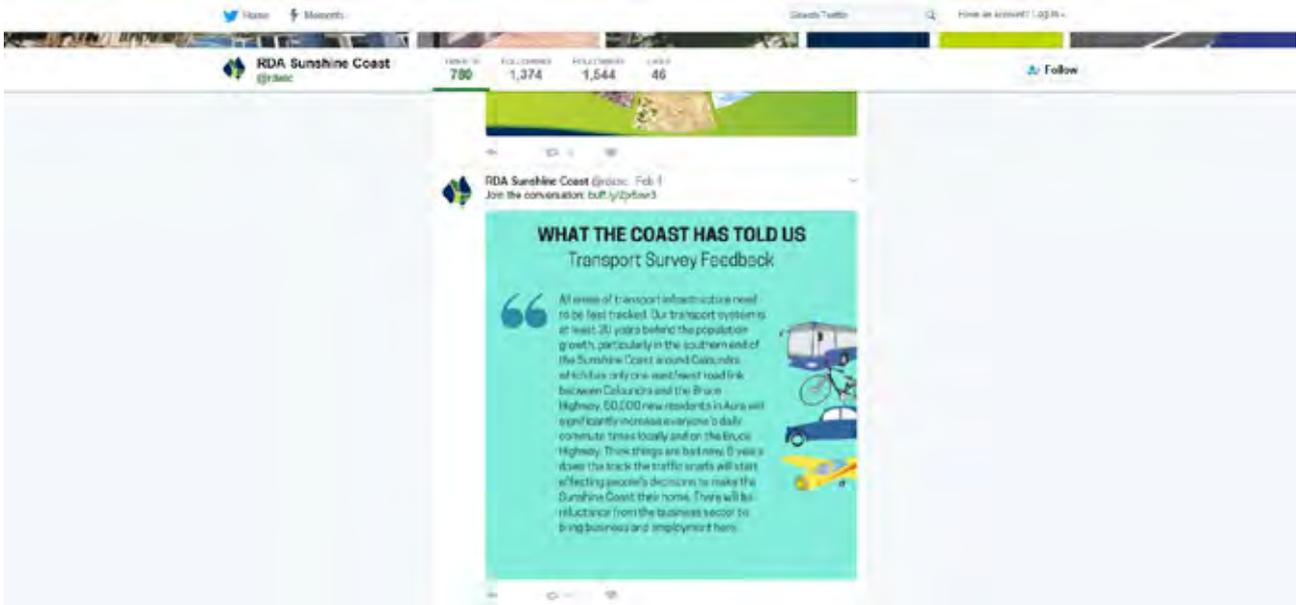


Figure B3 Twitter Post



Home News Sport Lifestyle Community What's On Jobs Motoring Real Estate Obituaries Classifieds ALL

BREAKING NEWS

BODYBOARDER TEMPTS FATE IN CYCLONE SWELL - More

NEWS

TOLL ROAD AHEAD? Would you pay to spruce the Bruce?



Felicity Moffat | 20th Dec 2016 1:29 PM Updated: 22nd Dec 2016 8:13 AM



ROAD CHAOS: Traffic is brought to a standstill after a multiple-vehicle crash on the Bruce Hwy.

On Chapman

AFTER one month relying on public transport to get around the Sunshine Coast, Darrell Edwards is convinced he and his wife can live with one car.

The Regional Development Australia Sunshine Coast CEO relied on buses, Uber, taxis, a bike and his own two feet.

"I proved to myself I only need one car," Mr Edwards said. "My next problem is which car will we sell."

The experiment was part of Mr Edwards' mission to help his organisation understand the Sunshine Coast's transport needs - a process that RDA will use to shape into goals and campaigns for transport infrastructure.

Having spent a month "practising what I preach", Mr Edwards said he had a positive experience but discovered several flaws in the Coast's public transport system. He also acknowledged that using buses to get to work was easier for him than it might be for others, as he lived in Alexandra Headland and worked in Maroochydore.

Buses were in "excellent condition" and were air-conditioned and comfortable, but the fare structure made little sense and it took "a lot longer" to get around, even if you were organised and planned ahead, he said.

"I caught the bus sometimes to Ocean St from Alex," he said. "It cost \$4.80 whereas to Noosa from (Maroochydore) Civic costs (about) \$7," he said.

"I think for people to use it more often there needs to be reasonable fares. The routes are okay, it's accessible. It's just the fares."

More than 80% of Sunshine Coast trips are taken in cars - a fact from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Mr Edwards said didn't surprise him.

"Sometimes I was on there alone," he said.

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EXPLAINED: Future of famed Shell Anatala fried chicken

Tomic snubbed from Davis Cup team 49 hours ago



Regional Development Australia Sunshine Coast CEO Darren Edwards left his car in the garage and used the bus system for a month.

Warren Lyman

"On one of the trips to Landsborough, I was the only person on the air-conditioned bus. It was like your own private limousine."

Last month RDA published a discussion paper on the Coast's transport infrastructure.

It argues that while recent government investment in transport projects has been significant, many Coast residents feel urgent projects - including the North Coast rail duplication, Bruce Hwy upgrade from

Caloundra Rd to Caboolture exits, and the Mooloolah River Interchange (MRI) - are not happening fast enough.

It also sought to start a fresh discussion on how to best solve our transport woes, Mr Edwards said.

Is there a need, for example, to consider alternative funding models such as public-private partnerships and tolls?

This is a key question in a survey released by RDA at the same time as its discussion paper.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics predicts the Coast's population will increase by more than 60% in the next 20 years - so the pressure on our roads and public transport systems is only going to increase.

"As part of the discussion paper we're trying to understand community sentiment around ways of delivering transport solutions," he said.

RDA's survey covers issues including how people feel about tolls, car pooling, and how important transport infrastructure issues are.

"There's no silver bullet," Mr Edwards said. "It's a combination of behavioural change, investment and funding models that'll be needed."

To have your say in the survey visit www.rdasunshinecoast.org.au/portfolio/transport-infrastructure-feedback/



Figure B4 Sunshine Coast Daily article

Appendix C

Poster

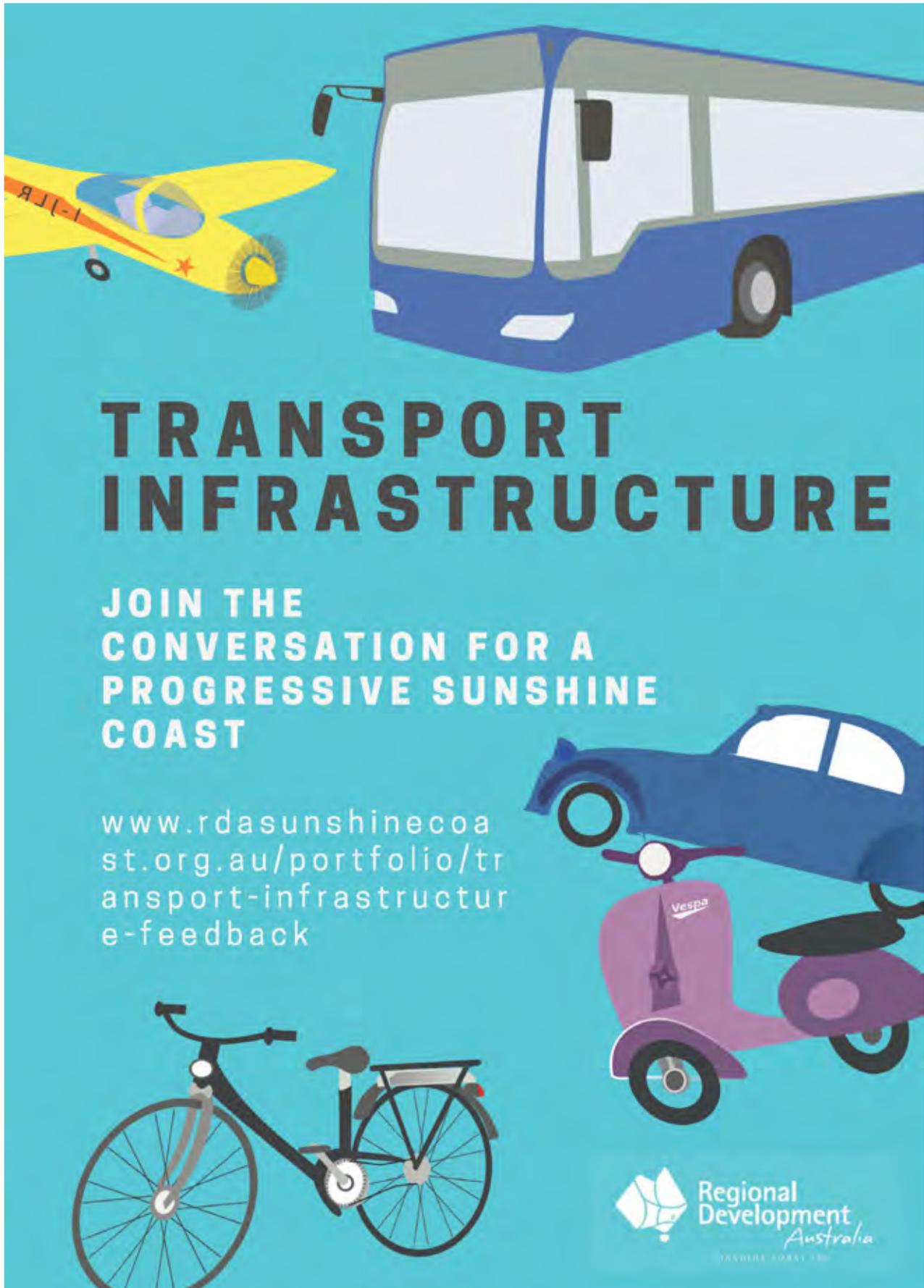


Figure C1 Poster



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