



GREATER WHITSUNDAY ALLIANCE  
MACKAY ► ISAAC ► WHITSUNDAY



# COSTING QUEENSLAND DEARLY

The economic impact of road closures to  
the Greater Whitsunday Region

# The Greater Whitsunday region makes an oversized contribution to the Queensland economy.

## GRP per Capita (2022):

Greater Whitsunday

Queensland

Australia



\$225,738



\$84,009



\$88,829

Our economic success comes from our primary industries, which rely on high productivity road transport networks.

### Mining and METS:



- Mining activity generates \$27.7 B in GRP (37.2% of QLD), which is supported by a large mining equipment, technology and services (METS) sector in Mackay
- 24/7 road access required for movement of workers and equipment between Mackay and mine sites
- Adequate road infrastructure is required to support heavy vehicles and oversized movements from Mackay to the Bowen Basin

### Leisure tourism:

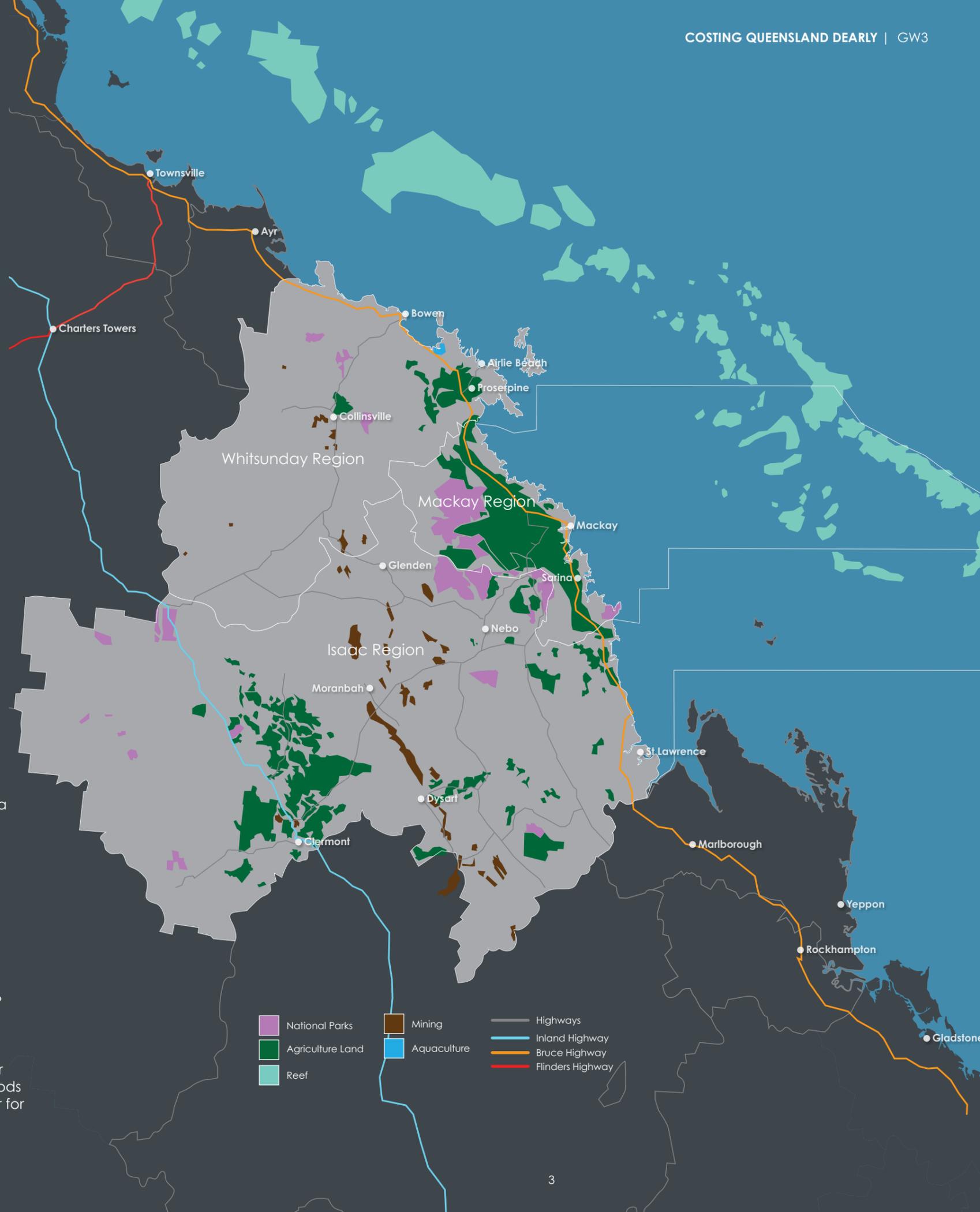


- Home to the Whitsunday Islands in the Great Barrier Reef and the Eungella Hinterland, leisure tourism generates \$1.3 B in GRP (6.2% of QLD leisure tourism)
- In 2022, we had 3.3 M visitors, spending \$2.6 B
- 24/7 road access required for movement of visitors throughout region, especially between Proserpine Airport and Airlie Beach

### Agriculture and aquaculture:



- The region produces 8.2% of Queensland's fresh produce, 6.8% of aquaculture, 27.2% of sugar and 10.6% of cattle, generating \$1.5 B in GRP (9.0% of QLD)
- 24/7 road access required for movement of fresh produce to markets
- The Greater Whitsunday region is situated along the key transport corridor for goods and services. Road closures not only impact our region, but goods and services to communities to the north and south. This impact is greater for perishable products including agricultural produce



# WE ARE SUSCEPTIBLE TO ROAD CLOSURES

Roads in our region are too often closed in response to an incident. Across the region there have been an average 71.8 road closures for 140.6 days annually, including on average:



## Whitsunday

18 closures for an average of 1 day



## Mackay

16.5 closures for an average of 4.2 days



## Isaac

37.3 closures for an average of 1.4 days



### Road Crashes

The Greater Whitsunday region has had 12 fatal crashes in 2023 to date, 6.7 times more frequent than Greater Brisbane.

(Per 100,000 people)



### Major Rain Events

Average January rainfall in Mackay is up to 3x higher than South East Queensland.

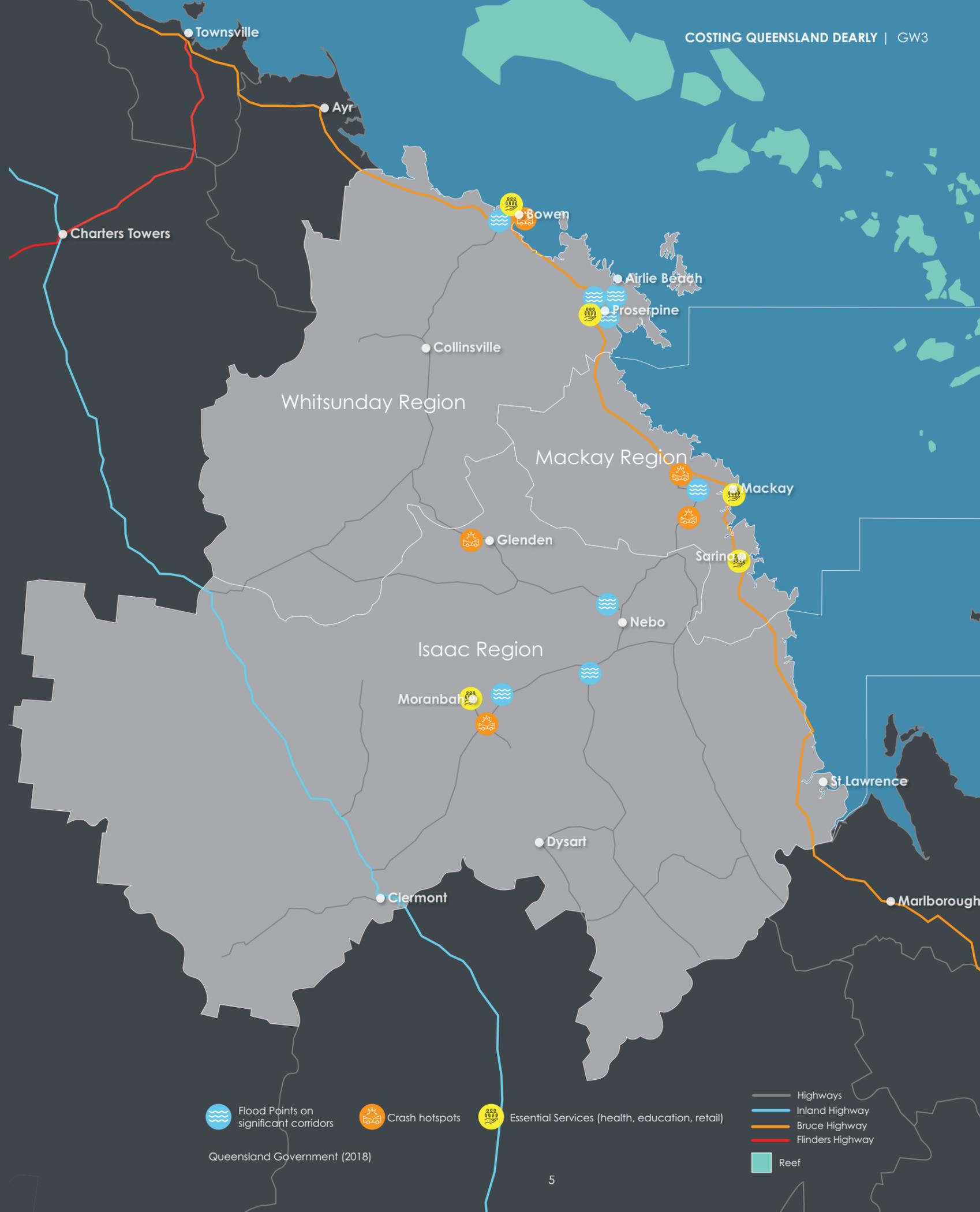
In January 2023, there was a significant flooding event that closed 56 roads within the Whitsunday LGA for between three to four days.



### Cyclones

In the last 55 years, 18 recorded tropical cyclones passed within 100km of the MIW region, with five since 2010.

Prolonged closures after cyclones due to poor road infrastructure hampers a community's recovery.



For additional detail refer to the AEC (2023) report *GW3 Road Closure Economic Analysis*. The report provides an in-depth analysis of these direct and lagging impacts, mapping the unique challenges faced by various sectors within the Greater Whitsunday region.

Flood Points on significant corridors

Crash hotspots

Essential Services (health, education, retail)

Queensland Government (2018)

Highways  
Inland Highway  
Bruce Highway  
Flinders Highway  
Reef

# ROAD CLOSURES IMPACT OUR ENTIRE ECONOMY

Road closures impact every part of the economy in many different ways

Impact	Sugarcane Production	Beef/Grazing	Horticulture & Aquaculture	Retail	Industrial / Manufacturing	Professional Services	Government	Emergency Services	Tourism	Health Services	Construction	Mining	Utilities	Wholesale Trade	Food Services	Transport	Education	Community Services	Personal Services	Other Services	Arts and Recreation	Defence
<b>Direct Impacts</b>																						
Closure of Venues/Facilities	-	-	-	Y	-	-	-	-	Y	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	-
Event Cancellations/Postponements	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	-
Disruptions to Operations/Production	Y	-	Y	-	Y	-	-	-	-	-	Y	Y	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Disruptions to Supply Chain and Logistics	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	-	-	-	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mobility and Transportation Issues	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Accessibility Issues for Staff and Visitors	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Disruptions to Service Delivery	-	-	-	Y	-	-	Y	Y	-	Y	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	Y	Y	-	-	-
Coordination Issues with Civil Authorities	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y
Financial Strain Due to Immediate Revenue Loss	-	-	-	Y	-	-	-	-	Y	-	-	-	-	-	Y	-	-	-	-	-	Y	-
Disruptions to Training and Regular Activities	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	Y
<b>Indirect (Lagging) Impacts</b>																						
Long-term Financial Strain	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Reputation and Trust Challenges	-	-	Y	-	-	-	-	-	Y	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	-
Long-term Strategic Reconsiderations	-	-	-	-	Y	-	-	-	-	-	Y	-	Y	-	-	Y	-	-	-	-	-	Y
Infrastructure Assessment and Investment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	Y	Y	-	-	Y	-	-	-	-	-	Y
Readiness and Training Delays	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y
Community Engagement and Cultural Impact	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	-	-	Y	-
Long-term Health and Well-being Concerns	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	-	-	-	-
Impact on Economic Growth & Development	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

# ROAD CLOSURES ARE COSTING US DEARLY

## Impact to our industries

Our economy is losing **\$287 M** in revenue and **215** full-time jobs annually.

### Revenue lost per year – top 5 industries



## Impact to our communities



The road closures cause disruptions to the everyday happenings of residents located within the Greater Whitsunday region and this creates inconvenience and frustration for residents. This negative impact has been valued as a disutility to households at **\$66M** annually (\$499M over 10 years in present value terms).

Without action, road closures over the next 10 years will cost the Greater Whitsunday Region

**\$1.4B** in Gross Regional Product

**\$126.1 million** in household wages

**2,146 FTE Jobs**

Present value terms

## OUR COMMUNITY IS SUFFERING

*"In the last three years, the Bruce Highway closures have had a significant and adverse impact on transporting our fresh produce to market. In some cases, we have had to add an extra day's timing because of the delays with our main transport artery, resulting in less fresh produce and financial losses to our business."*

**Local Horticulture Producer**

*"Road closures are frequent and make regular transport unreliable for our regional communities. For example, when attending a scheduled medical appointment, you have a fear that you won't be able to get there due to a road closure. If you do, you're afraid that you won't be able to get home."*

**Concerned local resident**

*"In Eungella, a mother of six children was stuck at work while the kids were stuck at home, both separated by road closures. There was a need to ask people in the community to look after her children until the road closure lifted. Our community pulls together, but the infrastructure should be fixed to prevent it."*

**Concerned local resident**

*"With the significant road closures in January 2023, we had to open two places of refuge including the PCYC in Bowen and the Proserpine Entertainment Centre. Food and bedding were provided by the local community."*

**Council Officer, Whitsunday Regional Council**

*"We operate a local flower business within the region and road closures impact our business significantly. Our usual flower deliveries from suppliers are delayed and the planned events we have in the pipeline face logistical issues."*

*Shipping is delayed for online orders, resulting in frustrated customers seeking refunds. The cost of those online refunds are borne by our business. We lose 100% of our revenue until the next delivery can be made, which is generally 48 hours unless road closures are prolonged even further, and in many cases the stock we have already bought is lost or substantially ruined."*

*We are also very wary and concerned about reputational damage – Ours is a business built on quality, and if flower deliveries are not provided on time in excellent condition, the customers won't return. For larger events we are forced to use airfreight, which is generally four times higher than road freight. This cost has to be passed onto our customers via a surcharge, and we lose work due to our higher fees."*

**Local Business Operator**



*"Tourism to the Great Barrier Reef contributes around \$5.7 billion to the Australian economy. 40% of the visitors to the Great Barrier Reef access it through the Whitsunday region. Our water-based tourism business relies on visitors accessing the region as well as being able to move about in the region. Road closures have a triple impact on our business. Firstly, the road closure event completely stops revenue generating activity as tourists in the region cannot travel to access our facilities – we are never able to recover these losses. Secondly, we experience significantly reduced activity in the 3-4 days following a closure event. When the road closes, so does the airport. Tourists have fixed holiday/leave periods so if they are unable to access the region due to cancelled flights, very rarely do they have the opportunity to reschedule their trip. Lastly, and possibly most frustratingly, our wages increase significantly during a road closure event. Our staff have to work more hours to manage the cancellation calls; all during a period of zero or low revenue."*

*Another real and very significant issue that is difficult to quantify is the the damage caused to the reputation of the region through negative media publicity shared through TV, print, and online media. This has a lasting and negative effect on tourism because it impacts visitor perception of the region when choosing their future travel destinations."*

**Local Tourism Operator**

## We need the Queensland Government to:

1. Deliver planned projects on time
2. Accelerate projects in planning to construction delivery
3. Cost and plan projects that require investment

## 1. DELIVER PLANNED PROJECTS ON TIME

Projects in Construction	Works	2023-24 (\$'000)	2024-25 (\$'000)	2025-26 to 2026-27 (\$'000)	Beyond (\$'000)
<b>Mackay LGA</b>					
Mirani - Mount Ossa Road, Mackay - Eungella Road to Bruce Highway	Improve Safety	\$685	-	-	-
Mirani - Mount Ossa Road, Ossa Creek	Realign and reshape existing curve	\$515	-	-	-
Bruce Highway, Palm Tree and Blackrock Creek Bridges	Strengthen bridges	\$2,500	\$5,440	-	-
Mackay - Slade Point Road, David Muir Street to Wren Street	Improve Safety	\$150	\$700	-	-
Mackay - Slade Point Road, Sydney Street and River Street intersection	Upgrade pedestrian crossing	\$215	\$672	-	-
Eton - Homebush Road, Peak Downs Highway to Sarina - Homebush Road	Improve Safety	\$470	\$2,300	-	-
Peak Downs Highway, Nebo - Mackay and Kellys Road intersection	Improve Safety	\$147	\$765	-	-
Munbura Road, Bells Creek	Replace bridge	\$2,500	\$2,500	-	-
Peak Downs Highway, Nebo - Mackay Eton Range	Improve rest area lighting and signage	\$100	\$400	\$130	-
Peak Downs Highway, (Nebo - Mackay), Kirkup Bridge	Replace timber bridge	\$200	\$3,794	\$6,100	-
Walkerston Bypass	New rural highway	\$44,754	\$40,858	\$20,228	-
Port Access Road, Bruce Highway to Mackay - Slade Point Road	Construct new two lane road	\$7,680	\$10,500	\$25,508	\$285,122
Ring Road Stage 1	Highway bypass	\$22,453	\$25,244	\$41,319	\$10,000
Peak Downs Highway, Nebo - Mackay East of Eton Range	Rehabilitative pavement	\$100	\$1,000	\$1,570	\$4,200
<b>Isaac LGA</b>					
Peak Downs Highway, Clermont - Nebo	Overtaking lanes Millennium Coal Mine to Carbourough Coal Mine	\$250	\$393	\$11,000	-
Saraji Road, Phillips creek	Replace bridge	\$5,900	\$11,100	\$1,000	-
Various roads	Construct floodways	\$440	\$672	\$1,151	-

# 1. DELIVER PLANNED PROJECTS ON TIME (CONTINUED)

Projects in Construction	Works	2023-24 (\$'000)	2024-25 (\$'000)	2025-26 to 2026-27 (\$'000)	Beyond (\$'000)
<b>Whitsunday LGA</b>					
Conway Road, Preston to Conway	Improve safety	\$627	-	-	-
Bruce Highway, Bowen Connection Road to Champion Street	Widen pavement	\$10,303	\$2,054	\$2,582	-
Bruce Highway, Bowen Connection Road	Improve intersection	\$3,094	\$1,604	\$535	-
Bruce Highway, Emu Creek to Brays Road	Widen formation	\$18,007	\$8,886	\$4,112	-
Proserpine - Shute Harbour Road Paluma Road to Valley Drive	Duplicate to four lanes	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$10,275	-
Proserpine - Shute Harbour Road Valley Drive to Tropic Road	Duplicate to four lanes	\$2,000	\$5,000	\$25,553	-
<b>Totals</b>		<b>\$127,090</b>	<b>\$127,882</b>	<b>\$151,063</b>	<b>\$299,322</b>

# 2. ACCELERATE PROJECTS IN PLANNING TO CONSTRUCTION DELIVERY

Projects in Delivery	Works	2023-24 (\$'000)	2024-25 (\$'000)	2025-26 to 2026-27 (\$'000)	Beyond (\$'000)
<b>Mackay LGA</b>					
Bruce Highway, Mackay to Proserpine	Jumper Creek upgrade floor immunity	\$4,400	\$1,217	\$1,490	-
Mackay - Bucasia Road, Bucasia to Rural View roundabout	Improve efficiency, planning	\$375	-	-	-
Mackay - Eungella Road, Pleystowe Connection Road and Pleystowe School Road intersections	Improve intersections	\$500	\$2,690	-	-
Maraju - Yakapari Road, Bald Hill Road to Bruce Highway	Improve safety	\$584	\$3,500	-	-
<b>Isaac LGA</b>					
Marlborough - Sarina Road, Clarke Creek to Bruce Highway	Improve safety	\$2,034	-	-	-
<b>Whitsunday LGA</b>					
Proserpine - Shute Harbour Road, Hamilton Plains	Flood immunity	\$8,180	\$6,171	\$2,618	-
Bruce Highway, Goorganga Plains	Plan and preserve	\$100	\$6,345	\$1,555	-
<b>Totals</b>		<b>\$16,173</b>	<b>\$19,923</b>	<b>\$5,663</b>	<b>-</b>

# 3. COST AND PLAN PROJECTS THAT REQUIRE INVESTMENT

Road Infrastructure	Works
<b>Mackay LGA</b>	
Sarina - Homebush Road (Rock Creek Bridge)	Replace bridge
Mackay - Eungella Road (Eungella Range)	Flood immunity
Marian - Eton Road (Sandy Creek - North)	Drainage/ lighting systems
<b>Isaac LGA</b>	
Marlborough - Sarina (Prospect Creek Bridge)	Flood immunity
Blue Mountain Road (Prospect Creek Bridge)	Flood immunity
Clermont Alpha Road - Clermont	Flood immunity
Gregory Highway	Flood immunity
Fitzroy Developmental Road	Flood immunity and safety
Peak Downs Highway	Flood immunity
<b>Whitsunday LGA</b>	
Bruce Highway at Leathebrook	Flood immunity
Bruce Highway at Merinda	Flood immunity





For more information, please contact GW3:

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Designed & Developed by the AEC Group Ltd

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