



Queensland Audit Office
better public services

Integrated transport planning

Report 4: 2017–18



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Report cost

This audit report cost \$530 000 to produce.

Reference to comments

In accordance with section 64 of the *Auditor-General Act 2009*, we provided a copy of this report to the Department of Transport and Main Roads, the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, Brisbane City Council, Sunshine Coast Regional Council, Mackay Regional Council, Isaac Regional Council and Whitsunday Regional Council. In reaching our audit conclusions, we have considered their views and represented them to the extent we deemed relevant and warranted when preparing this report.

Responses were received from the Department of Transport and Main Roads, the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Brisbane City Council. The responses are in Appendix A.



Your ref:
Our ref: 2017-9150P



12 December 2017

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Report to Parliament

This report is prepared under Part 3 Division 3 of the *Auditor-General Act 2009*, and is titled *Integrated transport planning* (Report 4: 2017–18).

In accordance with s.67 of the Act, would you please arrange for the report to be tabled. In accordance with s59A of the Parliament of Queensland Act and Standing Order 31, I request that this document be tabled during the period that the Legislative Assembly is dissolved.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'B. Worrall', is written over a light grey horizontal line.

Brendan Worrall
Auditor-General

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KEY FACTS



Transport plans cover statewide, regional, local areas, corridors and transport routes.



The State Planning Policy outlines 17 state interests that local governments across Queensland must consider in their planning.



Public transport, cycling, and private vehicles are examples of modes of transport.



The state invested \$4.3 billion on its transport infrastructure program in 2016–17.



The state spent \$893 million to maintain and operate the state transport network in 2016–17.



71% of Queensland's population lives in South East Queensland. It has the highest traffic volumes and most congestion.

Audit objective and scope

The objective of the audit was to determine whether the state's approach to strategic transport planning enables effective use of transport resources and a transport system that is sustainable over the long term.

We assessed whether:

- the Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR) provides an effective framework for coordinating transport planning that integrates with other government plans
- the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning (DILGP), DTMR, and local councils effectively integrate land use and transport planning.

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Summary

Introduction

Governments use transport plans to define their policies, goals and designs for how they intend to successfully move people and goods now and in the future. Transport plans need to integrate the components of the transport system in an effective and efficient way. This requires transport plans to integrate with other state, regional and local government plans.

Queensland's transport plans must address many challenges—from mobility issues on peak commuting routes in South East Queensland and access issues in regional areas, to rapidly changing consumer expectations and new technology (for example, self-driving vehicles). In addition, the Queensland Government forecasts a 54 per cent growth in South East Queensland population by 2041. This growth will increase pressure on the existing transport network and require additional investment in new transport infrastructure.

Four key pieces of legislation and the State Planning Policy guide transport planning in Queensland. The key planning documents the Queensland Government uses to meet the requirements of the legislation include:

- the transport coordination plan—provides a framework for coordinating planning and management of transport over the next decade
- regional plans—define desired outcomes for each region and provide the policy framework for achieving them
- regional transport plans—provide direction on how strategic transport objectives can be achieved for a regional area.

The Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR) is also developing a 30-year long-term transport strategy, the Queensland Transport Policy, to prepare for future transformations in transport and to improve transport system outcomes. This policy is not yet a legislative requirement. If the Queensland Government approves the Queensland Transport Policy, it will be one of the key transport planning documents to address transport challenges.

DTMR is responsible for strategic planning for Queensland's transport system. It has completed a *Transport Coordination Plan 2017–2027*, which it plans to release later in 2017. Its goals are focused on ensuring transport in Queensland is efficient and reliable, integrated, and safe and secure. Its objectives are that transport:

- meets the needs of all Queenslanders, now and into the future
- connects communities to employment and vital services
- facilitates the efficient movement of people and freight to grow Queensland's economy
- is safe and secure for customers and goods
- contributes to a cleaner, healthier, and more liveable environment and is resilient to Queensland's weather extremes.

To achieve these objectives DTMR needs to work closely with the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning (DILGP) and local councils.

DILGP is responsible for the State Infrastructure Plan and for developing regional plans. In August 2017 it published a new *South East Queensland Regional Plan (ShapingSEQ)* to sustainably manage change and growth in South East Queensland.

Local councils contribute to the state government's strategic plans and policies and use them to guide their activities in assessing development applications and planning for land use.

Audit conclusions

DILGP and DTMR are developing the foundations they need to effectively integrate land use and transport planning. Both departments are engaging well with each other and with local councils to develop plans that emphasise the need to integrate land use and transport better than they have in the past.

DTMR's framework for coordinating transport planning is well designed, but it needs more time to implement all elements within it to be fully effective in coordinating transport planning. Delays in finalising the Queensland Transport Policy and publishing the *Transport Coordination Plan 2017–2027* mean there is a lack of certainty over strategic direction. State and local governments are working together to integrate their land use and transport plans, but delays in publishing approved plans and policies could result in a disconnect with strategic priorities. We recognise that delays in finalising plans due to changes in government are not entirely within DTMR's control.

DTMR and DILGP understand the importance of measuring progress against transport outcomes, but they do not have comprehensive monitoring frameworks in place for all elements yet.

Despite incomplete planning elements, DTMR remains focused on delivering a sustainable transport system. It does this by prioritising its funding towards running and maintaining the existing transport network (which includes repair and renewal) and then investing in new infrastructure, when it can. This is important as renewal of the existing network has been, and continues to be, underfunded.

The underfunding has resulted in risks to the sustainability of the transport network. The overall condition of the transport network falls well short of DTMR's target standards. DTMR forecasts that the renewal backlog on the state-controlled road network will exceed \$9 billion over the next decade. Without alternative strategies to address the funding issues, DTMR faces a risk that it will not be able to maintain or improve service standards on the transport network to meet Queensland's future needs.

The approach to planning in *ShapingSEQ* focuses on making more effective use of existing resources. This includes:

- promoting higher density development, located where transport infrastructure exists
- making the best use of existing assets rather than providing new infrastructure
- improving the capacity of the public transport system through high-frequency services and connecting these with active transport connections (for example, walking and cycling).

However, while *ShapingSEQ's* preferred future is for South East Queensland transport users to have better transport experiences, transport modelling for vehicle travel indicates the opposite is more likely. The modelling of the transport system performance under most of *ShapingSEQ's* assumptions shows potential average peak travel times will increase significantly by 2041 compared with 2016 average travel times. The modelling indicates that delivering the intended transport outcomes will require infrastructure and non-infrastructure solutions, including new strategies to manage user demand and influence how people travel.

These challenges to managing growth with a transport network that is at risk of deteriorating as a result of insufficient renewal funding, demonstrate how critical it is for DTMR to complete its work on the Queensland Transport Policy. An approved and published policy is needed to clearly communicate the transport challenges Queensland faces and how best to address them.

Summary of audit findings

Please note this is a summary of the findings. The full findings are in the following chapters.

Coordinating transport planning

Strategic framework for coordinating transport planning

The strategic framework DTMR has included in its *Transport Coordination Plan 2017–2027* explains its processes for coordinating the planning and management of the transport system. But because DTMR is still developing or awaiting approval for documents within this framework (such as the transport coordination plan itself, the Queensland Transport Policy, strategies for different modes of transport, and regional transport plans), it is not yet clear how the various outputs of the strategic framework integrate.

DTMR has clear processes and practices that it can apply to program planning once the Queensland Government approves the transport projects and programs it will go ahead with.

Developing transport coordination plans

DTMR's currently-approved and published transport coordination plan covers the period 2008–2018. Since then, DTMR has developed three draft plans—in 2011, 2013, and 2016. It did not publish the 2011 and 2013 versions because of changes in government. It did, however, use the 2013 draft for internal decision-making purposes, until it drafted its most recent plan. In October 2016, DTMR released a draft of its *Transport Coordination Plan 2016–2026* for public consultation. Between June and September 2017, DTMR's *Transport Coordination Plan 2017–2027* was approved by both its ministers, but the plan has not yet been tabled in parliament or published on DTMR's website.

Because DTMR has not been able to publish any of three draft transport coordination plans it has prepared since 2008, DTMR is not being held to account publicly for its performance against all its current transport coordination plan objectives. For example, DTMR does not currently publish performance results for any of the community connectivity or environment and sustainability measures it has in its *Transport Coordination Plan 2017–2027*.

Defining transport coordination plan objectives

DTMR's *Transport Coordination Plan 2017–2027* includes specific and measurable objectives and defines the intended transport outcomes better than previous plans have. With clear, measurable objectives, DTMR can monitor progress and make informed decisions to achieve the desired results.

Prioritising transport investments

DTMR has defined spending criteria that are consistent with the *State Infrastructure Plan's* principles. These prioritise running and maintaining the existing transport system (repair and renewal) over building and expanding the system. This is because there has been insufficient investment to renew transport infrastructure. Renewal involves any work on an asset or asset component that attempts to restore the component to its original service standard. This is essential for minimising the whole-of-life costs.

Since 2011–12, the percentage of resources DTMR has devoted to running and maintaining the system has increased and this trend is set to continue. However, the amount it plans to allocate to maintain and renew (extend the useful life of) the network is not enough to stop the transport system from further deteriorating. DTMR continues to communicate current and prospective infrastructure maintenance gaps to Queensland Government agencies and Infrastructure Australia through funding submissions and its total asset management plan.

DTMR has calculated that it has a \$4 billion renewal backlog for its road network as at 30 June 2017. It estimates the renewal gap will increase to more than \$9 billion over the next 10 years. This will affect DTMR's ability to meet minimum performance targets; it will compromise service standards; and it will require DTMR to reprioritise works to address safety-related defects on its network at the expense of works to renew its assets.

Integrating strategies for modes of transport

DTMR has system strategies for Queensland's different modes of transport, like passenger transport and cycling. These are known as 'modal strategies'. However, because DTMR has not been able to publish any of the three draft transport coordination plans it has developed since 2008, the modal strategies either do not refer to, or fully integrate with, the transport coordination plan objectives.

DTMR does not:

- make publicly available information showing how its modal strategies support the objectives of the transport coordination plan
- have monitoring mechanisms to effectively track what contribution each of its modal strategies makes to the transport coordination plan objectives.

On 13 October 2017, one day after we issued this report for comment, the Deputy Premier tabled the *Transport Coordination Plan 2017–2027* in parliament. DTMR can now start to publish how its modal strategies support the transport coordination plan and the results of its performance against the plan's objectives.

Integrating regional and transport planning

DILGP's and DTMR's updated governance approach for developing regional (strategic land use) plans and the new generation of regional transport plans involves extensive stakeholder consultation.

The new approach also involves modelling and analysis with the aim of developing evidence-based strategic land use plans.

Planning engagement

DILGP engaged DTMR and local councils, and largely addressed their views, when it developed and updated the *State Infrastructure Plan*, the *State Planning Policy*, and the *South East Queensland Regional Plan (ShapingSEQ)*.

When DILGP was not able to address gaps agencies identified for the *State Infrastructure Plan* and *ShapingSEQ*, it was because agencies requested changes that:

- ran contrary to the government’s position (for example, to be more precise and committed about projects in the five- to fifteen-year timeframe)
- or
- would require a public policy position to be developed first (for example, on demand management and pricing policies).

Planning analysis

DILGP and DTMR provided an adequate basis for their core strategies and directions within the *State Infrastructure* and *ShapingSEQ* plans. The need to use existing infrastructure, unsustainability of the unconstrained urban development, and addressing the underinvestment in maintenance were examples of the reasons they gave for their strategies.

DTMR has developed a suite of strategic and more locally-focused transport modelling tools to assess the impact of proposed statewide, regional, and local policies and plans and specific projects. DTMR regularly applies this capability when it develops business cases to assess specific transport projects.

It also used this capability to help DILGP to develop *ShapingSEQ*, by seconding one of its senior staff to DILGP to model the transport outcomes of the draft version of *ShapingSEQ*. However, DILGP did not engage DTMR to forecast transport outcomes for the measures in the final version of *ShapingSEQ*.

While DILGP included different measures in the final version of *ShapingSEQ*, both the draft and final plans set a preferred future for transport outcomes to improve.

We analysed the measures from DTMR’s modelling to assess if the results were consistent with *ShapingSEQ*’s preferred future of improved travel time and distance. *ShapingSEQ* measures this across all modes of transport to measure people’s travel experience, but DTMR’s model only forecasts travel time and distance for vehicles. While this makes it difficult to compare, it shows whether *ShapingSEQ*’s preferred future correlates with DTMR’s modelling data for vehicles.

The analysis DTMR did for DILGP for *ShapingSEQ* indicates a risk that the recommended directions and measures underpinning it may not be sufficient to maintain current levels of service and achieve intended transport outcomes. For example, instead of achieving a reduction in average travel times, the model forecasts an increase of about 30 per cent in average travel time for private vehicle travel.

Figure A shows how the model forecasts compare with *ShapingSEQ*’s preferred transport future, using the measures DILGP included in the draft and final versions of *ShapingSEQ*. It reveals that the potential for reduced travel time for commuters using private vehicles is unlikely to be realised. According to 2016 census data for Queensland, 84.7 per cent of people who travelled to work on census day travelled by private vehicle only.

Figure A
Comparison of the preferred transport future in *ShapingSEQ* against DTMR's transport modelling for greater Brisbane

BSTM measure (vehicles)	Transport modelling—2041* (vehicles)	Draft <i>ShapingSEQ</i> preferred future (all modes)	Final <i>ShapingSEQ</i> measure (all modes)	Final <i>ShapingSEQ</i> preferred future (all modes)
Vehicle km travelled per person per year	2.8 per cent (29.9 to 30.7 km per person per day)		—	—
Average length trip	10.7 per cent (12.7 to 14.0 km)		Average travel distance all trips	
Average trip time	29.6 per cent (15.2 to 19.6 mins)		Average travel time all trips	

Note: * DTMR developed this model to understand the impact on the transport system of any demographic and land use changes proposed by *ShapingSEQ*. The modelling results were for the wider Brisbane area only. BSTM—Brisbane Strategic Transport Model.

Source: Queensland Audit Office from draft and final versions of *ShapingSEQ* and Department of Transport and Main Roads' modelling results.

It will be critical to monitor this risk and actual trends, compared to planned trends, as part of *ShapingSEQ*'s ongoing monitoring and measuring success plans.

While we acknowledge the model does not include all *ShapingSEQ* policies, it includes substantial components and provides valuable information on the potential transport outcomes. DILGP did not complete (or require DTMR to complete) a report of the modelling exercise it conducted when it developed *ShapingSEQ*. DILGP did not document:

- the rationale for its strategic modelling approach, including the key assumptions made
- how it used the transport modelling results to inform the development of *ShapingSEQ*.

However, DILGP advised us that its senior officers discussed these matters with the senior transport modeller it seconded from DTMR.

We further examined the challenges facing the transport system by applying the DTMR transport model, with its population and employment growth assumptions, to a specific corridor. We selected Kingsford Smith Drive, a transport corridor between the Gateway Motorway and Breakfast Creek, where there are already plans to upgrade the road to accommodate expected growth.

We requested modelling of the current (2016) traffic volumes and the forecast traffic volumes for 2041 that informed the *ShapingSEQ* regional plan.

The model results show that increasing the capacity of this corridor from two to three lanes in each direction will not fully mitigate the impact of increased traffic volumes. The model forecasts that, by 2041, traffic speeds on Kingsford Smith Drive will reduce significantly by between 30 per cent and 70 per cent for over half the corridor in the morning and afternoon peaks.

Developing transport plans

Over the last decade, there has been inconsistent coverage of transport plans for Queensland regions. All regions outside of South East Queensland have outdated, draft, or no regional transport plans.

DTMR has recognised this problem and will be delivering transport plans for all regions by February 2018.

DTMR adequately engaged with DILGP and local councils to develop the first pilot regional transport plan—the *Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday Draft Regional Transport Plan*. DTMR can show how it has taken account of agencies' inputs in developing this plan.

The Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday regional plan and regional transport plan contain the same overall objectives. The population growth forecasts that support the two plans have changed. The regional transport plan does not address what effect the lower population forecasts have on the integration between land use and transport planning. DTMR also needs to do more work to demonstrate how the transport-related actions align to the regional plan goals.

Regional transport planning must identify, analyse, and prioritise problems at every level of the planning process. DTMR's accelerated program of developing 12 regional transport plans by February 2018 means it will conduct a detailed assessment of the problems facing each region when it implements the actions it outlines in the regional transport plans.

The *Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday Draft Regional Transport Plan* includes 49 actions—mostly about developing plans and strategies, and investigating the feasibility of improvement options. Implementing, monitoring and measuring the outcomes of the actions in the plan will help DTMR develop a stronger, evidence-based understanding of regional problems and potential solutions. However, while DTMR has identified officers responsible for regional transport plan actions, it has not yet timed the delivery of these actions or the resources it requires to implement the actions.

DTMR did not conduct regional-level modelling to inform problem definition and potential solutions in the *Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday Draft Regional Transport Plan*. This was because it considered data, previous study findings and other sources of evidence it already had, and the value of, and cost and time constraints of conducting further analysis. In developing the draft regional transport plans, it will be able to identify the areas most in need of the strategic modelling capability.

Measuring and monitoring performance

Transport coordination plan

DTMR has improved the way it measures and communicates the performance of the transport system. Together, its *Queensland Transport Snapshot*, *Service Delivery Statement*, and *State of the Asset Report* provide a good foundation for measuring the performance of the transport system against the *Transport Coordination Plan 2017–2027* objectives. These measures have the potential to provide decision-makers with valuable insights into transport trends and the effectiveness of actions to address problems.

However, DTMR has not yet documented a consolidated analysis of its performance measures to show to what extent they achieve the transport coordination plan objectives.

DTMR's performance framework for its *Transport Coordination Plan 2017–2027* addresses all the goals and objectives of the plan, but has gaps in terms of adequately reporting:

- public transport efficiency, reliability, and integration—It includes bus performance for a limited selection of 12 out of 275 daytime bus routes in South East Queensland. The framework does not cover other forms of public transport such as trains and ferries.
- safety and security related to public transport and ports—It includes information on road crashes throughout Queensland, but nothing on injury and fatality risks for other modes of transport, the number of crimes committed on public transport, or passenger perceptions of safety while using public transport.
- customer satisfaction and the impact on customers—Its measures indicate, but do not directly measure, the outcomes for customers. For example, DTMR reports the number and total duration of incidents, but not the impact they have on customers in terms of the number of hours lost.

The *Transport Coordination Plan 2017–2027* indicates that DTMR will update the performance measures as required to ensure they effectively measure performance towards the objectives.

DTMR built a powerful and useful web-based tool to track the performance of its infrastructure investments. This partly measures the objectives of the transport coordination plan. Currently, it is only accessible to DTMR staff, which means that other interested parties, such as members of parliament and the public, cannot easily see the performance information.

Regional land use and transport plans

The progress monitoring and performance measurement frameworks for *ShapingSEQ* and the *Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday Draft Regional Transport Plan* need to be clearer about how DILGP and DTMR will:

- monitor, report, and manage progress on actions
- measure, report on, and manage performance.

While DILGP's performance measures to monitor transport outcomes will help it understand whether *ShapingSEQ* is progressing its transport-related strategies, the measures may not be sufficient to highlight the risks to achieving the *ShapingSEQ* 'Connect' objectives. For example, *ShapingSEQ* does not include measures for peak period performance and average commute time (work and education trips) across all modes of transport.

ShapingSEQ is not clear about who will track, monitor, report and identify strategies for addressing adverse trends in performance.

DTMR needs to set baselines for performance measures in its regional transport plans so it can show over time to what extent it is achieving the intended outcomes.

Priority development areas

The agencies responsible for the four priority development areas (PDAs) we reviewed adequately engaged with relevant state agencies and local councils to understand and address transport issues likely to affect the success of the PDAs.

However, Economic Development Queensland (EDQ), which is responsible for planning priority development areas under the *Economic Development Act 2012*, has not demonstrated how it will monitor progress towards intended transport outcomes and respond to trends and risks that potentially undermine them. EDQ has shown it understands the need to better monitor progress and manage the risks but has not demonstrated significant progress in addressing this need.

Recommendations

Department of Transport and Main Roads

Queensland Transport Policy

We recommend that the Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR):

1. assesses the merits of amending the *Transport Planning and Coordination Act 1994* to require its chief executive to prepare a transport policy for the minister's approval. (Chapter 2)

Regional transport planning

We recommend that DTMR:

2. strengthens how its regional transport plans integrate with regional land use plans (Chapter 3)

When both plans are developed in a region, this means documenting how:

- regional transport plans and regional land use plans align in terms of the goals, outcomes, and input assumptions
- transport-related actions in regional plans are considered in regional transport plans.

3. sets baselines for key performance measures in all 12 regional transport plans (Chapter 4)

This should be based on the performance measures that are most appropriate for each region.

4. develops a plan to implement the actions from the regional transport plans (Chapter 4)

This should include identifying the resources it requires for each action (including transport modelling tasks), and the timeframe and priority of each action.

5. updates the regional transport plans after it has implemented the actions that will help it define the problems for each region. (Chapter 3)

This should include:

- defining problems for each region based on the evidence it collates when it implements the actions from the plans
- identifying any necessary new actions
- prioritising all actions based on the problem definition.

Modal strategies

We recommend that DTMR:

6. develops performance monitoring mechanisms for the objectives of the transport coordination plan for all of its modal strategies (Chapter 2)
7. updates its modal strategies and once approved, publishes them with the transport coordination plan as an integrated framework. (Chapter 2)

The modal strategies should show how they support the transport coordination plan objectives.

Performance reporting

We recommend that DTMR:

8. develops an integrated performance report to track progress against the transport coordination plan objectives. (Chapter 4)

DTMR should periodically publish performance results against the transport coordination plan to show the extent to which it achieves the plan's objectives.

Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning

Regional land use planning

We recommend that the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning (DILGP):

9. when developing future regional plans, documents its analysis of DTMR's strategic transport modelling and how it uses the modelling to inform regional plans that have a transport focus (Chapter 3)
10. develops and implements a performance monitoring framework for regional plans. (Chapter 4)

This should detail how and who will be responsible for:

- tracking progress against objectives and actions
- monitoring and reporting progress on outcomes, including transport outcomes
- identifying whether strategies are performing as expected and adjusting where required.

Priority development areas

We recommend that DILGP:

11. clarifies how it will monitor and measure transport outcomes in its existing priority development scheme evaluations. (Chapter 4)

This should describe the key performance indicators, and the methods DILGP will use to measure progress, and assess and mitigate risks to the achievement of objectives.

Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Department of Transport and Main Roads

Risk identification and management

We recommend that DTMR:

12. assesses and analyses the risks of not achieving the preferred transport future in *ShapingSEQ* and reports it to DILGP, where relevant, for the purpose of monitoring and reporting on the performance of the plan. (Chapter 3)

We recommend that DILGP works with DTMR to:

13. improve the completeness of evidence retained to support key decisions made in developing land use plans. (Chapter 4)

When testing planning scenarios, documentation for transport modelling should summarise the objectives, scope, assumptions, results, conclusions, any limitations, and any decisions made.

Auditor-General reports to parliament

Reports tabled in 2017–18

Number	Title	Date tabled in Legislative Assembly
1.	Follow-up of Report 15: 2013–14 Environmental regulation of the resources and waste industries	September 2017
2.	Managing the mental health of Queensland Police employees	October 2017
3.	Rail and ports: 2016–17 results of financial audits	December 2017
4.	Integrated transport planning	December 2017

Contact the Queensland Audit Office

