

# CUMMINGS ECONOMICS

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## Statistical Note

### PENINSULA ROAD SEALING MILESTONE

A drive over Peninsula roads carried out in July/August 2023 indicated the Peninsula Developmental Road (PDR) from the Lakeland turnoff to Weipa is now 66% sealed. Only 202km of the 590km route remains unsealed.

Table: Sealed & Unsealed Distances – PDR – Aug 2023

	Sealed	Unsealed
Lakeland to Coen	200km	95km
Coen to Bamaga turnoff	120km	30km
Bamaga turnoff to Weipa	68km	77km
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>388km</b> <b>66%</b>	<b>202km</b> <b>34%</b>

This means that Weipa, that is a similar distance from Cairns (818km) as Mackay (746km), is coming within reach of a day's travel in daylight tours. Importantly, a major new bridge is under construction over the Archer River that will play a major role in reducing time of the year the road is closed due to flooding.

The branch road into Iron Range and Lockhart River community is now 60% sealed (58km sealed). The branch road into Aurukun is fully sealed. Unfortunately, the road from the Weipa turnoff through to Bamaga is still only 16% sealed with some very rough sections badly in need of more regular grading. The Jardine River crossing remains by expensive vehicular ferry with a bridge still not constructed.

Eventually, completion of sealing the road through to Bamaga at the top end of the Peninsula will put Bamaga with similar driving distance (999km) and driving time as Cairns to Rockhampton (1064km).

The progressive upgrading of the roads into the Peninsula has come a long way over the decades. In the 1960s, the bitumen cut out at Biboohra on the northern outskirts of Mareeba and it was dirt road all the way to Cooktown and nothing further north. The bridge over the Palmer River was a series of parallel logs. The completion of sealing the road to Cooktown occurred about 2000. The pace has quickened since then with completion of sealing through to Weipa now within sight.

Development of the Peninsula is important to the city of Cairns as the Far North Region's major servicing capital. Apart from minerals and tourism potential, there are large areas of potential agricultural land and areas suitable for more intensive pastoral development.

The Cape York Peninsula area from the Endeavour River on the east coast north and the Coleman River north of the west coast accounts for about 11% of Australia's total water runoff.