

# CUMMINGS ECONOMICS

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April 2025 - CERef-J3536

Comment

## CAIRNS MELBOURNE VIA THE HANN LINK

### ONE SMALL STEP FOR MOTOR VEHICLES – ONE BIG STRIDE FOR THE CAIRNS REGION

When in 2004, we were asked by Flinders Shire to look into the Economic Impact of upgrading to sealed standard the remote road link on the Kennedy Highway between the Lynd Junction and Hughenden, we soon identified benefits to local graziers, benefits of upgrading access to attractions along the way of Porcupine Gorge, the volcanics of Blackbraes National Park and access to the legendary Oak Park Racecourse.

But it soon became evident that there was an unrecognised ‘elephant in the room’. Sealing this remote section of road was the final link in opening out a sealed direct route right through to Melbourne with a potential distance saving of the order of 700km. The road links down to the Lynd Junction from the north and the road links up from Winton to Hughenden had been sealed in the previous decade. The Hughenden Lynd link of only about 200km was still unsealed. We set about quantifying the economic benefits and prepared artwork maps to illustrate the potential of the Cairns Melbourne transcontinental route.


But not only was the route shorter, it avoided traveling through numerous built-up areas thus making travel time faster. From Mt Garnet down to Bourke in New South Wales, the route could be used by cost saving triple road trains.

Also, of importance for the Cairns region, it provided a direct link for visitor traffic between the Waltzing Matilda tourism region around Longreach and Winton with the prime tourist region around Cairns and the Tablelands. This was an important step along a further nation building ‘Outback Way’ route, a third east/west route across Australia via Alice Springs, Kata Tjuta and Laverton and Kalgoorlie in Western Australia that we were also asked to carry out Economic Impact Analysis about the same time.

Perhaps predictably, Main Roads did not recognise the potential benefits and we received the reply they could not justify sealing a road that has a low daily traffic count of only about 20 odd vehicles a day at the lowest point.

However, over time, Flinders Shire, politicians and promotion bodies in the region pushed for the sealing to take place. Now about 20 years on from the first work we did on the route, it looks as though the last short distance left will be upgraded.

However, that will not be the end of the matter. There will need to be the beginning of a new phase to bring the attention of freight and tourism interests to the new possibilities the transcontinental route will bring in direct links between the north’s most populous region and Melbourne and Adelaide in the south and the communities along the way.




The map shows a route from Cairns at the top to Melbourne at the bottom. Key locations along the route include Tablelands, Lynd Junction, Hughenden, Winton, Barcaldine, Longreach, Blackall, Charleville, Cunnamulla, Bourke, Cobar, Griffiths, and Melbourne. Major roads are labeled: DEVEL. RD. HANN HWY. (highlighted in red), KENNEDY HWY., MATILDA HWY., MITCHELL HWY., and KID MAN HWY. Directional arrows point to Townsville, Mt Isa, Alice Springs, Rockhampton, Brisbane, Adelaide, and Sydney. A red circle highlights the Lynd Junction to Hughenden section.

# KENNEDY DEVELOPMENTAL ROAD

## Lynd Junction to Hughenden Section

### (HANN HIGHWAY) DEVELOPMENT REPORT



## Economic Impact Benefit Cost Analysis

AUGUST 2005  
UPDATED  
SEPTEMBER 2008

