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A National Highway to enable regional growth.

‘It’s time to embrace a New Era for the North, indeed a long term vision for our region. A serious commitment to extending our National Highway is a key part of my vision to grow the north’ says Daniel McCarthy KAP candidate for Leichhardt.

McCarthy’s plan consists of 4 key points that will transform Far North Queensland and open up untold opportunities now and for future generations to come.

The north has suffered the boom and bust cycle whilst being too heavily reliant on tourism. Our tourism industry is fantastic and we must keep it strong. It too will benefit from this vision.

This plan will help strengthen and build other more stable elements of our regional economy.

4 key initiatives to this project:

- * Upgrading the Kuranda Range**
- * Extending our National Highway to Weipa**
- * Sealing the PDR (Peninsula Development Road)**
- * Engaging only Local contractors**

1. Upgrade the Kuranda Range road.

The Kuranda Range Road is an major route supporting the economies of Cairns, the tablelands and the greater region.

The range is currently at its design limits of around 9500 vehicle movements per day and the road has one of the Highest ‘head on’ collision rates in the country. Fatalities are low due to slow speed but head on collisions are near the top of list.

In order to grow our regional economy its essential we have a Safe and reliable Heavy vehicle route to and from the airport and seaport to support growth in Agriculture and transport of building materials, fuel and fertiliser.

Upgrades required:

- * Use the existing roads alignment and widen it to 2 lanes each way for its full length**
- * crash barrier divider all the way**

The expert advice I have received estimates this would cost less than \$350M.

Importantly the cost benefit analysis stacks up. The benefit to the region will be enormous.

2. Extend the National Highway status to Weipa.

There has been hollow talk leading up to several elections over many years about moving the national hwy designation from its current end point at Portsmith to Smithfield.

“Whilst the idea of moving it to Smithfield has some merit, clearly there hasn't been the political will nor muscle to make it happen to date.

My plan and commitment to move the Highway designation up the Kuranda range, through Mareeba, along the Mulligan Highway and along the PDR to Weipa. This will have a far greater positive impact for the entire region and our economy” says McCarthy.

The federal government has had to fund for the PDR to date, so we may as well own that whole road and relieve the financial burden off the state government and local councils.

“Let's get serious with this nation building project instead of just fluffing around with social niceties. Let's Build some real industry enabling infrastructure for the region” says McCarthy.

3. Seal the Peninsula Development Road (PDR).

It's quite ridiculous that in 2019 we are still having to fight for a major highway that services the top 3rd of the state, to be safe and accessible for more than half the year” says McCarthy.

My plan includes:

- * sealing the remaining 214kms of dirt
- * up grade the bridge at Rifle creek, Mt Molloy
- * an up grade of the Mcleod river bridge
- * build a bridge over the Laura river on the northern side of town.
- * a bridge over the Archer River
- * a bridge over the Jardine river on the road to Bamaga.

“The people of Cape York Peninsula, families businesses, farmers and aboriginal communities Will all be enormously empowered with an almost all year round road access for freight of everything from food to live stock” says McCarthy.

The expert advice I've received says the PDR upgrade will cost in the order of \$250M.

The return of investment to the region would be many times this amount. Cape York's economy will forever flounder until this is completed.

4. Local Contractors Only

All Federal money MUST be spent with local contractors. Real local contractors, not southern contractors with a local post office box.

If the job is too big for one operator they can gang up with other local contractors to get the job done. I know my state KAP colleges will push very hard for this at state level as well.

“The huge Southern based firms get the lions share of work in regional Queensland and Our local teams rarely get a look in. Governments are spending Billions down south, it's about time they spent some up here And with our local contractors” says McCarthy.

“This 4 step plan will help take us into a New Era for the North” says McCarthy.

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